

DOCUMENTS OF  
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT  
IN INDIA

VOLUME II







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VOL. II

MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE (1929)



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### **List of Abbreviations used**

CI	—Communist International
ECCI	—Executive Committee of Communist International
CPI	—Communist Party of India
CPGB	—Communist Party of Great Britain
BCI	—Bulletin of Communist International
INPRECORR	—International Press Correspondence of Communist International
INC	—Indian National Congress
CPC	—Communist Party of China
AITUC	—All India Trade Union Congress
AIWPP	—All India Workers' and Peasants' Party

## Introductory Note

This Volume (Volume No II) mainly deals with Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929. The Meerut Conspiracy Case had revealed, both nationally and internationally, that Marxist ideology had taken its root in the Indian soil and it had come to stay in this country. Most of the Indian National Leaders who were very much opposed to Marxist ideology, carried on a systematic campaign that this was a "Foreign" ideology and as such not suited to India. They made no attempt to critically study this ideology or adduce any arguments against it. As a matter of fact, like science, an ideology cannot be confined within the boundaries of a country or a continent where it originates. The educated sections of Indians acquired the concept of liberty and democracy from Europe and America since the 19th Century but they did not brand them as "Foreign" ideology.

That the Marxist ideology, based on class-struggles, was not alien to the Indian people, was eloquently proclaimed by the accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. In the Confidential Report compiled by the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department, Government of India, in 1933, during the British Rule in India, entitled "**India and Communism**", it was stated in Page 126

*'By the end of 1928, therefore, there was hardly a single public utility service or industry which had not been affected, in whole or in part, by the wave of Communism which swept the country during the year. Transport, industrial and agricultural workers of every description (clerks, policemen, colliers and even scavengers were amongst the many who were subjected to, if they did not*

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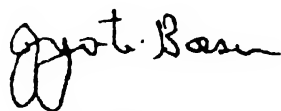
*fall under the baneful influence of this whirlwind propaganda campaign which promised them the sweets of revolution if they would but raise their hands to grasp them "*

This confirms that Communist Movement based on Marxist ideology had made its appearance in India in the 1920s and to suppress it the panicky Government of British India laid the charge of conspiracy against prominent Communists including a British subject in the Court at Meerut. The trial made this ideology more popular to larger sections of Indians.

The Rulers of British India started this case at Meerut to avoid trial by Jury. But they could neither suppress the Communist Movement in India nor could silence the Communist leaders accused in this case who were capable enough to use the Court platform to propagate the justness of the Communist Movement and exposed the brutalities of the British Rulers in India.

We have published in this Volume the documents of the Meerut Conspiracy Case and the statements made by the accused before the Trial Judge of this Court. For all intents and purposes these documents will be treated as documents of burning urge for freedom and for elimination of class-exploitation in our country.

I am sure, these documents will be treated as most inspiring for all times to come and the present and the future generations in India or in any other country will find these documents inspiring enough to sharpen their conviction to carry on the fight against injustice and for preservation of democracy and freedom.



(JYOTI BASU)  
Chief Editor



## Foreword

The British did not allow the Communists and socialist ideas to penetrate into India which became the order in the world following the October Revolution. Terrible repression was inflicted on those who tried to carry those theories in the form of books and literature into the soil of India. The first attack was on the Mohajirs, the early revolutionaries. Cooked up cases were instituted against them just after they returned from Tashkent. Three conspiracy cases were instituted by the British rulers to suppress the Communists. The first was the Peshawar Conspiracy Case, followed by the Kanpur Conspiracy Case and then came the Meerut Conspiracy Case. The Meerut Conspiracy Case and its outcome is a landmark in the history of the Communist movement. It came at a time when the entire capitalist world was trembling in the worst ever crisis called the Great Depression, at a time when the newly born socialist state Russia had been making tremendous advances. On the national plane the crisis was so deep that strike struggles mounted to the peak where Communists and revolutionaries took a very leading role. It also influenced the national movement in a very big way. At the Lahore session of the Congress, the Congress had to adopt declaration for complete independence. The British were alarmed that unless checked the national movement would pass into the hands of the Communists and the revolutionaries. Meerut Conspiracy Case was started from March 1929 and lasted for four and a half years. The entire nation was spell-bound by this barbaric act of the British rulers. Unprecedented at that time was the international support and solidarity for the Meerut prisoners. The Communist Party of Great Britain played a very important role by raising funds for the defence of the prisoners and campaigned for

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Communist ideas. Even great scientists of this century Albert Einstein and Romain Rolland raised their voice against the British rulers and in favour of the Meerut prisoners. Conditions were not existing at that time for the legal work of the revolutionary forces and the Communists. That is why the Meerut court was utilised fully by the Meerut prisoners to declare the aims and objectives of the Communist Party defying all the threats of cruelty. In the general statement of 18 accused Communists, the analysis of the world situation and the national situation, the national revolution, agrarian problem, the trade union movement, tactics for achieving national liberation and the basic ideas of Communism was explained for the first-time. They were bold enough to state at the outset of their statement that: ".....in a colonial country, such as India is, the revolution will precede the proletarian revolution, will be of the nature of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This will achieve the complete freedom of India from the control of British Imperialism, and the complete abolition of all feudal and pre-feudal forms of social organization and will result in the establishment of an Independent Democratic Republic. This is the revolution for which we were working, and we are convinced that the programme which was put before the country, the programme of the united anti-Imperialist front of all those classes capable of carrying through the revolution, was the only correct programme for attaining it.

"Our programme and the activity which we undertook in our efforts to put it into effect, have been much misunderstood and also intentionally misrepresented by the Prosecution and by the Magistrate who committed. We think it necessary both for the court and for the assessors that the chief particulars in which the Prosecution has tried to lead them astray should be corrected by us. This is the main purpose of our statement."

The bold stand taken by the Communists accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case gave a big encouragement and direction to the growing movement of the working-class, peasantry and other toiling millions. Though the British imperialists through this trial wanted to suppress the Communist movement, in the wake of the deepening crisis of Indian economy and the developing hatred

against the British rule, its result was quite the opposite. Not only the ideas of socialist revolution but the steps taken by the new state were popularised. The Meerut trial laid the basis for setting up an All India Centre of the Communist Party with a well thought out platform that gave a thorough analysis not only of Imperialism but also of the Indian society and the tasks that the Communists have to carry out.

In the history of the Communist movement in India, the Meerut trial has a very special place. It was this trial that laid the foundations of the organised Communist movement and thwarted all efforts of British Imperialism by taking a bold stand on all issues concerning revolution undaunted by all threats. A study of their statement would enlighten readers of the role the Communists have played in the freedom movement, putting forward the concept of real freedom that would not only unleash the productive forces but also lead the country to overall economic, social and political development.

*Harkishan Singh Surjeet*

(HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET)

*General Secretary*

Communist Party of India (Marxist)



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# 1. MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE (1929)



## **A Brief History of Meerut Conspiracy Case\***

**Muzaffar Ahmad**

Numerous persons in India and abroad were startled to read the statements made day after day at the Meerut Sessions Court by the Communists among the accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, there were some non-Communists also among the accused. It is usual for persons standing trial on charges of criminal offence to try to escape conviction through every possible loophole in the law, and if they make any statement in Court, they do it so as to weaken the allegations brought against them. The Communists in the Meerut Conspiracy Case acted in an altogether different manner. The statements they made day after day in the Sessions Court, instead of establishing any grounds in their favour, foredoomed all chances of escape. Through their statements the Communist prisoners sought to establish Marxism ideologically and politically and to create conditions for the emergence of a strong Communist Party in India. That these statements could be used against them and even result in enhanced sentences mattered little to them.

In the Meerut District Jail where we had been taken after our arrests (I also was one of the accused), we were kept in separate barracks, mostly in cellular barracks. Except for a brief spell in the morning and in the afternoon we were shut up all the time within the barracks. As I had a history of tuberculosis I was kept with others in the jail hospital. But we were strictly forbidden to see or talk with one another. There was a cellular barrack on either of the two sides of the spacious campus.

**\*Written By Muzaffar Ahmad as Introduction to COMMUNISTS CHALLENGE IMPERIALISM FROM THE DOCK relating to Meerut Conspiracy Case**

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Shaukat Usmani and Dr Gangadhar Adhikari occupied the barrack on the right side. It was possible—with utmost caution, of course—to talk with them when they were brought out of their barrack in the afternoon. This was the first time Dr Gangadhar Adhikari was arrested on a charge of criminal offence. Shaukat Usmani and myself on the other hand, had been among the accused in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case in 1924. The Government of India had with deliberate intent publicised the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case as the Bolshevik Conspiracy Case.

Quite naturally when we met we talked about our case. I told Dr Adhikari that the careful preparations with which the Government had launched Prosecutions against us showed that long sentences were inevitable. Then why should we not turn the Sessions Court into a propaganda platform by making political statements? I told him further how deeply sorry I was for not having made a similar use of the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case. Dr Adhikari agreed to my proposal. It was also agreed that when all of us could meet together we would take a decision on this issue first.

There had been really no sense in keeping us segregated from one another in jail. However we were transferred to a very big barrack even before the commencement of the inquiry in the Magistrate's Court. A case under Section 121-A of Indian Penal Code and cases under all sections involving treason are triable by Court of Sessions. Before committing a case to the Sessions, the Magistrate has to hold a preliminary inquiry into the allegations by recording evidence of witnesses.

As soon as we came together we the Communist accused came to the decision that by making statements day after day we would transform the court room into a political forum for the disseminations of our ideology and to equip ourselves for this mission by study beforehand. It was decided further that besides statements to be given individually by every accused the Communist accused would make a General Statement. This book is the General Statement.

At a certain stage of the proceedings in the Magistrate's Court and also in the Sessions Court under Sections 364 and 342 of the Criminal Procedure Code of India respectively every accused person is summoned from the prisoner's dock to the witness box. The accused can make a statement in his own defence at this stage.

The statement, however, is not evidence, since the accused is not required—as a witness is—to take the oath. It has been already stated that the statements made by the Communist defendants in the Meerut Conspiracy Case were made in the Sessions Court.

It is necessary to say something about the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Sections 121-130 of the Indian Penal Code apply to offences involving treason. To launch Prosecution under any of these sections, previous sanction from either the Central or the State Government is required. The police have not the authority to institute proceedings directly.

On March 14, 1929, the Governor General of India-in-Council granted sanction to launch Prosecutions against certain persons under Section 121 A of the Indian Penal Code. Next day (i.e., on March 15) proceedings were instituted in camera before the District Magistrate of Meerut who immediately issued warrants of arrest against the accused persons. Armed with these warrants, Officers of the Central Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India moved out with extreme promptness all over India. The name of the officer who as complainant filed the complaint before the Magistrate in his chamber was Mr R. A. Horton. In his petition before the Magistrate Mr Horton described himself as an officer-on-special-duty attached to the Central Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India. Later, of course, we saw this officer serving as a Deputy Inspector General of Police in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh—now the State of Uttar Pradesh.

Before giving his sanction to launch these Prosecutions, the Governor General of India had obtained the sanction of the Secretary of State for India though this was not necessary at all under the Criminal Procedure Code. In fact, the Prosecutions were launched in the interest of the foreign policy of Great Britain though various happenings within India were used as excuses for this action.

On the strength of the warrants issued by the District Magistrate of Meerut searches were carried out for hours together not only in different parts of India but also in different localities of the same town. The police not only seized and carried

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away in sacks books, papers and pamphlets, they took away even the office signboards of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties and of many Trade Unions. The persons who had warrants against them were arrested on the same day. The trial lasted for more than four years, and throughout this long period, workers, peasants and people belonging to the middle class observed March 20 as the MEERUT DAY.

I have already referred to the Cawnpore Communist Conspiracy Case in 1924 which preceded the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Even in 1922-23 and in 1924 also (i.e., before the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case) there had been a number of Communist Conspiracy Cases in Peshawar in the North West Frontier Province.

But 1929 was not 1924. Many things had happened in the meantime. Organisations of Workers and Peasants Parties had been formed independently in various parts of the country, and in the last week of December 1928 a conference was held in Calcutta in which all these organisations were merged to form the All India Workers and Peasant Party. All this was made possible by the initiative of the Communist Party of India, then a small organisation but with its leadership well established in the Workers and Peasants Party. In the All India Trade Union Congress also the influence of the Communists had been on the increase from 1928 onward. There were Communists on the top bodies of the Indian National Congress too. Communist R. S. Nimbkar was elected Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. Communists were also elected to the All India Congress Committee. There was Communist influence also behind the formation of the well known Youth Organisation in the Punjab— the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha*. Of course, Bhagat Singh was one of its founders, but he drifted towards revolutionary terrorism in course of time and became associated with the Hindusthan Republican Army. The name was later changed to Hindusthan Socialist Republican Army. There was some Communist influence on this organisation also.

During 1927-28, the Trade Union Movements, led and supported by the Communists, acquired unprecedented militancy and there was a radical change in its character. Several strikes lasting for months took place during this period. In Bombay, the strike of the textile workers, which continued for many months, led to the formation under Communist leadership of the famous *Gunt Kamgar Union* (Lal Bawta). The word *gunt* means 'mill', and *bawta* means 'flag'.

The British Government in India was a good deal perturbed by all these developments. When in 1928 the Draft Public Safety Bill was presented before the Indian Legislative Assembly, we realised that in framing the Draft the authors had kept in view, among other things, especially Spratt and Bradley. Philip Spratt and Benjamin Francis Bradley were members of the Communist Party of Great Britain and under direction from the Communist International had been engaged in organisational work with us in India. Both were British nationals. The British Government in India, however, was not at all happy at their presence here. But there was no law which could be invoked to expel them as undesirable foreigners. A British subject once he had entered India, could not be driven out of the country. The Public Safety Bill provided for the expulsion from India of European British subjects whom the Government might deem undesirable.

Led by Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Congress Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly decided that they would oppose the Bill. They said that they had no weakness for the Communists but the Government had failed to convince the country of the reality of the Communist danger. Other parties including even the Independent Party of Muhammad Ali Jinnah joined hands with the Congress on this issue. What Pandit Motilal Nehru wanted was to heat up the political atmosphere of the country before the session of the Congress, which was to be held in December 1928 in Calcutta. And the events which followed justified expectations. At different places in the country meetings were held, protesting against the Bill. The substance of the views, expressed in these meetings, was that the Government was without any reason trying

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to scare the country with the Communist bogey. The Bill was debated for days together in the Central Assembly. When, finally, the Bill was put to vote, the Government was defeated by the margin of one vote. Immediately after this, the autumn session of the Assembly concluded, and the Governor General promulgated an ordinance incorporating the terms of the Bill.

The next session of the Indian Legislative Assembly was held in March, 1929. By that time all the accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case had been rounded up and brought to Meerut. After incorporating some fresh provisions in the Bill, the Government of India presented it once again before the Central Assembly. Mr. Vitthalbhai Patel, who was then the President of the Assembly, advised the Government either to withdraw the Meerut Conspiracy Case and get the Bill passed or to withdraw the Bill and proceed with the case. But the Government paid no heed to his counsel. So when the Government sought his leave to introduce the Bill, Mr. Patel, as President of the Assembly, gave the ruling that, as the Bill affected the sub-judice Meerut Conspiracy Case, the Assembly could no longer discuss the Bill.

During 1928, when powerful movements of the working class were in progress in various parts of India, the Government had been collecting materials for the Prosecutions to be launched against us. We could see only the immediate object of the Public Safety Bill but not what had gone before. It was only after the charges had been framed against us that we realised that the Government had been collecting materials well in advance. Lawyers also had been studying these materials for over a long period and for this purpose the Government had engaged the services of Mr. Langford James, a renowned Barrister of the Calcutta High Court. Mr. James had selected his favourite, Mr. Jashprokash Mitra - then a young Barrister - as his junior counsel. It was actually Mr. Mitra who had been studying the papers and documents relating to the Case and sifting them for the attention of Mr. James. We do not know since when they had been doing this nor the exact amount they were paid for their labours, but there is no doubt that they received considerable sums. The Government had engaged Mr. James at a fee of 80 guineas



per day and Mr. Mitra at a fee of 5 guineas per day for the entire period of the trial. It may be mentioned in this connection that in the Calcutta High Court a guinea has the constant value of Rs. 17/- These fees were to be paid whether the Court was in session or not, and irrespective of holidays. Besides, the Government paid for their quarters and for various other amenities. They also received allowances under various heads. According to an estimate made by us at that time, Mr. James used to receive a total sum of Rs. 34 000/- per month.

The number of persons accused at the beginning was thirty-one. The names of Ameer Haidar Khan and Hugh Lester Hutchinson, an Englishman, were included a few days later. Hutchinson was not a member of any Communist Party and had come to India as a freelance journalist. After our arrests he had started working in Communist Trade Unions in Bombay and writing for an English weekly. He was brought to Meerut after his arrest. The Police, however, failed to arrest Ameer Haidar Khan. Ameer Haidar belonged to Rawalpindi District of the Punjab. He was a sailor. On one occasion he left his ship and stayed behind in America where he took up a job in an automobile factory. While working there he not only mastered his job but learnt to speak and write English as well. He obtained also an aviator's licence and purchased a second hand plane. He joined the Communist Party in America and was sent for training to Moscow. After the completion of his training he returned to India. He worked for the Party in Bombay while serving in the General Motors Company. As soon as he got wind of the warrant of arrest against him, he went into hiding. While in hiding he visited Europe. On his return to India he devoted himself to the task of building the Communist Party in Madras. Many of the present day leaders of the Communist Party of South India joined the Party at the inspiration of Ameer Haidar Khan. One day—towards the tag-end of our trial at the Meerut Sessions Court—he fell into the hands of the police. To bring him for trial at Meerut at that stage meant starting the entire proceedings over again from the beginning—a course which the Government could not take after the lapse of so many years. Proceedings, however, were started against him in Madras, and he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for two years.

The number of persons accused, including Hutchinson, at the Magistrate's Court was thirty-two. When the case was committed to the Sessions, Chaudhury Dharamvir Singh was discharged. He was the elder brother of Shri Mahavir Tyagi, M.P. Chaudhuri Dharamvir used his family title before his name. Shri Mahavir Tyagi, however, does not do this. They belong to the Tyagi Community of Brahmins of Meerut.

Besides Ameer Haidar Khan, there were among the accused thirteen members of the Communist Party of India. Bradley and Spratt were members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Dr. Gangadhar Adhikari was originally a member of the Communist Party of Germany. Abdul Majeed and Shaukat Usmani were members of the Communist Party of India, formed in Tashkent in October, 1920. Dharanikanta Goswami, Gopendra Krishna Chakravarty, Gopal Chandra Basak and Radharaman Mitra were not members of the Communist Party of India, but they signed the General Statement as 'Communists by Conviction.' The Government having failed to prove that P C Joshi was a member of the Communist Party of India, he also signed the General Statement as a 'Communist by Conviction' under instructions from the Party. The signature of Dange, one of the thirteen Party members, does not appear in the General Statement. The reason was that Dange had been expelled from the Party earlier for carrying on from jail factional activities in Bombay.

In course of the Prosecution the Government of India submitted a list of names of individuals and organisations, described as 'co-conspirators'. This list, however, was not submitted at the beginning. But as their names were being referred to time and again during the inquiry at the Magistrate's Court, the accused objected to this and demanded to know how these references arose; because of this a big list of 'co-conspirators' was submitted before the Court. Among the organisations cited in the list there was the League against Imperialism and for National Independence. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was a member of the Executive Committee of the League. It was on his initiative the Indian National Congress at its Madras Session in 1927 affiliated itself to the League.

Though many individuals and organisations fighting against Imperialism and for national independence participated in founding the League, it is impossible to deny the immense influence exercised by the Communist International behind its formation. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was in Europe when the League was holding its first session in Brussels in February 1927. He secured the sanction of the Indian National Congress and attended the Brussels Conference as an official delegate. He was elected to the Executive Committee of the League.

In his *Autobiography* Pandit Nehru has written, 'I do not know who originated the idea. I regret to say that Pandit Nehru knew everything. Those with whom he had discussions about the League in Berlin were Communists. Willi Muntzenberg and Virendranath Chattapadhyay were elected Joint Secretaries in the Conference. Muntzenberg was a member of the German Communist Party. Though Virendranath Chattapadhyay had strongly opposed the formation of a Communist Party in India in 1921, he joined the Communist Party in Germany a few years later. It is quite possible, though I am not certain about it, that he joined the Communist Party of Germany in 1927. When Jawaharlal Nehru met us first in the Meerut District Jail after our arrests, he said, 'How little do these accused persons know about the Communist International! I know a lot more than they.'

My reason for saying all this here is that there was a possibility of implicating Jawaharlal Nehru also in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. A Government which could arrest an innocent person like Chaudhri Dharamvir Singh could easily lay its hands upon a man like Jawaharlal. Though the attitude of the Government towards the Congress had softened to some extent in view of the resolution on Dominion Status adopted in its Calcutta Session, nevertheless, the Congress leaders and friends of Pandit Motilal Nehru apprehended that the Government might send Jawaharlal in the dock along with the other accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, and because of this top leaders of the Congress and even of Hindu Mahasabha visited us either in jail or at the Court in Meerut. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, of course, never visited us. The Congress set up a Meerut Defence Committee with Pandit Motilal

Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru as its President and Secretary respectively. However, in order to facilitate work, Doctor Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari and Babu Girdharilal of the Punjab acted as its working President and working Secretary. We did not hear of anyone except Pandit Motilal Nehru and Doctor Ansari making any contribution to the Defence Fund. Though many of the big Congress leaders had promised to make handsome contributions, the promises were not kept. The Committee, however, took the entire fund collected by our friends.

On the opening day of the inquiry at the Magistrate's Court, we found the place full of Vakils and Barristers. There were Mr. Deokiprosanna Sinha of Patna, Mr. Kshitish Chandra Chakravarty of Calcutta and Mr. M.C. Chagla, the Barrister from Bombay, who was Mr. Jinnah's Junior at the time. Mr. Chagla subsequently became the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court and is now the Minister for External Affairs of India. There were also Mr. Chandrabhan Gupta of Lucknow, who later became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, and many others present on that day at the Court. Mr. Faridul Haq Ansari, Doctor Ansari's nephew and a Barrister, was also present. He became later a whole-time worker of the Congress Socialist Party. We could not see any reason for mobilising such a large number of lawyers at the stage of inquiry of a case which would surely be committed to the Sessions Court. The Defence Committee had consulted none of us previously. Among the Vakils and Barristers, only Kshitish Chandra Chakravarty and Deokiprosanna Sinha remained till the end of the inquiry at the Magistrate's Court, which lasted for more than seven months. We were committed to the Sessions Court on January 14, 1930.

Even before the completion of the preliminary inquiry at the Magistrate's Court, it became evident that there was no longer any likelihood of any proceedings being started against Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and by the time inquiry ended the Defence Committee had lost all signs of vitality. Special mention should be made of one incident which happened during this time. When we were about to be committed to the Sessions, Pandit Nehru informed us (not this time in a personal capacity but on behalf of

the Congress) that in view of the impending Civil Disobedience Movement, the Congress could no longer look after our Case. There was, of course, nothing that we could object to in this, but what astounded us was the class character of the Congress leaders exposed in the process. The Congress leaders advised us to plead guilty at the outset of the proceedings at the Sessions Court. They said that though this guilty plea would not save us from a light sentence, yet the Case would be ended immediately. Before going to produce salt in defiance of the Government ban, the Congress had planned to draw us into an ocean of shame. The Congress wanted to sabotage completely our plan of propagating our ideology from the floor of the Court and of building thereby a strong Communist Party in India. The Communist prisoners rejected outright this gratuitous advice of the Congress leaders, communicated through Jawaharlal. Even the non-Communists among us, who were not reluctant to plead guilty, refrained from doing so for reasons of prestige.

Mr Langford James once approached us and asked us who would act as our Defence Counsel. We told him that we would conduct our own defence. Mr James was really dismayed to hear this. The Government can appoint lawyer for the defence of a person of insufficient means accused of a capital offence. But in our case the maximum sentence on conviction was transportation for life. The Government, therefore, was under no obligation to grant us free legal aid. Still Mr James made this offer. Mr James was in very bad health and was concerned at the prospect of conducting the Prosecution. We told him that since the Government would not give us the help of a lawyer of his calibre, it could appoint someone from the next lower rank. The fees of lawyers of this rank also were very high. Mr James beat a retreat at this suggestion. However, Sibnath Bandopadhyaya and D R Thengdi, both non-Communists, engaged at Government's cost. Mr Deokiprosanna Sinha at a fee of Rs. 1,500 per month. We the Communists, engaged Mr Sheoprasad, a junior lawyer of Meerut, to represent us only in case any of us fell ill and were unable to attend Court, so that the proceedings were not held up. We used to pay Mr Sheoprasad a very small sum as fee yet he remained till

the end of the trial at the Sessions Court. Very few lawyers, however junior they might be, could carry on year after year on such a meagre fee. The fact was that as a result of long association Mr Sheoprasad had come to develop an affection for us. During arguments Mr Pyarelal Sharma, a well-known advocate from Meerut and a renowned speaker in Urdu and English, conducted the argument on behalf of P C Joshi. He was an old man and did not practise more than was sufficient to give him the bare minimum for his livelihood. He had not studied the papers and documents in the case and was not, therefore, in a position to argue to much advantage. He just made a fine speech in English. But neither the Judge nor the Counsel for the Prosecution did make the least effort to challenge his arguments. Everybody knew that when provoked, Mr Sharma became a completely different man. His opponents dared not face him in such a mood.

One day in course of conversation, Mr James said that possibly some day the words Meerut Conspiracy Case would be written over his coffin. A few days after the commencement of the trial at the Sessions Court his apprehension was proved true. He passed away all of a sudden one day. Though he was on the Government's side we felt sorry at his death. He could keep the Court in good humour by his lively wit. Mr K M I Kemp who took his place as the Chief Counsel for the Prosecution was cold as a marble statue. We could not discover the slightest trace of humour in his character.

Some idea of the gigantic scale on which the Case was conducted can be had from the following extract from the judgement of the Allahabad High Court. "The trial has become somewhat notorious on account of its unprecedented duration. All the accused persons, except Hutchinson, were arrested in March 1929 (Hutchinson was arrested in June of the same year) and have all this time, except for the period during which some of them were released on bail, been detained in jail. The trial commenced in the Court of the Committing Magistrate on a complaint filed on March 15, 1929, and a supplementary complaint filed against Hutchinson on June 11 1929.

"The entire proceedings have now lasted for nearly four years and a half This is accounted as follows —

- (1) the preliminary proceedings before the Magistrate took over seven months, resulting in the commitment of the accused to the Court of Session on January 14, 1930,
- (2) in the Sessions Court the prosecution evidence took over 13 months,
- (3) the recording of the statements of the accused occupied over ten months,
- (4) the defence evidence lasted for about two months,
- (5) the arguments continued for over 4½ months,
- (6) the learned Sessions Judge took over five months thereafter to pronounce his judgement,
- (7) the last of the appeals was filed in the High Court on March 17 1933, and as the paper books were all ready and printed, April 10 1933 was fixed for the hearing of the appeals But the accused themselves applied for an adjournment of the hearing till after the long vacation, to which the Crown Counsel agreed Accordingly July 24, 1933 was fixed for the appeals, on which date the arguments commenced, and having lasted for 8 working days were concluded yesterday [August 2, '33]

'The case was conducted on a gigantic scale The evidence consists of 25 printed volumes of folio size There are altogether 3,500 Prosecution exhibits, over 1,500 defence exhibits and no less than 320 witnesses were examined The judgement itself is in two printed volumes covering 676 pages of folio size

"A mass of documentary evidence consisting of papers in printed, typewritten and manuscript forms, books, pamphlets, letters, notes, slips and other documents found in the possession of the various accused at the time of the searches as well as those found at the search of numerous other places have been produced and there is a mass of oral evidence both from India and England to prove them There is also voluminous evidence to prove the various political activities of all the accused and their associations with each other "

(From the judgment of the Chief Justice Dr. Sir Shah Mohammad Sukman and Justice J. Young of the Allahabad High Court delivered by the Chief Justice on August 3 1933 )

## 16 Documents of The Communist Movement in India

Mr R L Yorke I C S , was brought to Meerut as an Additional Sessions Judge specially appointed to try this case. He read out his judgement on January 16, 1933, and obliged those whom he convicted by furnishing each of them with a copy thereof, printed in the Government of India Press in Simla in two volumes, consisting of 676 pages of foolscap folio size.

While the judgement was being written, D R Thengdi, the sixty-eight-year-old engineer, passed away. He had been President of the Bombay Workers and Peasants' Party. Biswanath Mukherjee, a homoeopath of Gorakhpur, Sibnath Banerjee of Calcutta and Kishorilal Ghosh were acquitted. In all twenty-seven of the accused were convicted. They were:

- 1 Muzaffar Ahmad  
(transportation for life )
- 2 S A Dange
- 3 Philip Spratt
- 4 S V Ghate
- 5 Keshav Nilkanth Joglekar
- 6 Raghunath Shivaram Nimbkar  
each to transportation for a period of *twelve years*
- 7 Benjamin Francis Bradley
- 8 Shantaram Suvlaram Mirajkar
- 9 Shaukat Usmani  
each to transportation for a period of *ten years*
- 10 Mir Abdul Majid
- 11 Sohan Singh Josh
- 12 Dharanikanta Goswami  
each to transportation for a period of *seven years*
- 13 Ajodhya Prasad
- 14 Gangadhar Adhikari
- 15 Puran Chandra Joshi
- 16 Motiram Gajanan Desai  
each to transportation for a period of *five years*
- 17 Gopendra Chakravarty
- 18 Gopal Chandra Basak
- 19 Hugh Lester Hutchinson
- 20 Radharaman Mitra



21. Shiavakash Hormasji Jhabwala
22. Kedar Nath Sehgal  
each to *four years'* rigorous imprisonment.
23. Shamsul Huda
24. Arjun Atmaram Alve
25. Gobinda Ramchandra Kastle
26. Gauri Shankar
27. Lakshman Rao Kadam  
each to *three years'* rigorous imprisonment.

The sentences passed were unexpectedly severe. Mr. Yorke had his own back upon us for the exasperation we had been causing him so long. He took no cognizance at all of the widespread protests and agitations of workers all over the world, especially those of Great Britain against our trial. On the contrary, he amused himself at our cost by ordering us to be treated as Class III convicts. Rules for special treatment of political prisoners had been introduced, the Meerut prisoners had played a considerable role in bringing them about. The Government was somewhat embarrassed by this prank played by Mr. Yorke upon us. We were treated as Class II prisoners for the entire period of our sentences.

Now that the trial at the Sessions Court was over, the next course was to prefer an appeal to the High Court. Whatever use we could make of our trial for propagation of Communist ideas had been done at the Sessions Court. It was our intention now to fight the appeal before the High Court with all seriousness. I have already stated that the Congress-sponsored Meerut Defence Committee had ceased to function before the completion of the inquiry at the Magistrate's Court. Over all these years we had to depend almost entirely on contributions which came from the British workers, though, of course, there were occasional contributions of small amount from sources within the country. Even the meagre sum which we used to pay as fee to Mr. Sheoprasad was paid out of the remittances of the British workers. The workers of other European countries and America also came forward to help us. But the British Government in India permitted us to receive only the remittances of the workers of Great Britain. On the initiative of the Communist Party of

Great Britain and British friends, the British workers had set up a Defence Committee with Mr. Reginald Bridgeman as its Secretary. In deciding to appeal to the High Court we counted wholly on the special funds collected by this Defence Committee.

Among the junior advocates of the Allahabad High Court, Miss Shyamkumari Nehru and Mr. Ranjit Sitaram Pandit, the Barrister, first came forward to help us; so did Mr. Banke Behari, a friend of Puran Chandra Joshi, and a couple of other advocates. There was the question now of engaging a senior advocate. In spite of the earnest efforts of Mr. R.S. Pandit on our behalf, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru could not be persuaded to accept the brief for us. So at the suggestion of Miss Shyamkumari Nehru and Mr. R.S. Pandit, we decided to engage Dr. Kailas Nath Katju, and he agreed to accept our brief. He had conducted the appeal case on behalf of Manabendranath Roy and got the term of his sentence reduced from twelve years to six years. It was settled that Dr. Katju would be paid a daily fee. We also paid him a handsome amount for a preliminary study of the papers and documents in the case. Dr. Katju moved the appeal to the High Court and secured bails for some of the prisoners. But as none of the Communists were given bail Dr. Katju told the Court that it would be different for him to have their advice. The High Court agreed to grant bail to only one from amongst us. We suggested the name of Dr. Adhikari, who was granted bail.

About this time Dr. Katju had to go to England in connection with some piece of business with the Privy Council. Anticipating an adverse judgement from the High Court, preliminary steps were taken to prefer an appeal to the Privy Council. To avoid confusion, it should be stated here that Dr. Katju went to London with a brief from one of his clients and not in connection with our case. Our British comrades availed themselves of the opportunity and arranged for Dr. Katju to meet Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. D. N. Pritt. They agreed to accept our brief for appeal to the Privy Council. Prof. Harold Laski told Dr. Katju in England that, when he had been in America, President Roosevelt, who had invited him to dinner, had raised the subject of the Meerut Conspiracy Case and had enquired why the Case was being protracted for

such a long time. Prof. Laski also told Dr. Katju that he could use this information in his argument before the Court.

Dr. Katju had no love for the Communists then; neither has he any now. But prejudice notwithstanding, he would undoubtedly have done his best in the capacity of a professional lawyer. It is my impression, however, that his visit to England at that time also influenced him in some degree in our favour.

Mr. R.S. Pandit was not only a Pandit by surname, he was a real pundit (i.e., scholar). He was a man of large and liberal sympathies. During the hearing of our appeal in the Allahabad High Court he got Mr. Khurshid Naoroji to set up a Defence Committee and collect some funds for us.

Our appeal was heard by Dr. Suleiman, Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, and Mr. Justice Douglas Young. It was generally expected that the hearing would continue for quite a long time. But, surprisingly enough, after having sat for eight working days the Judges delivered their judgement.

(1) Motiram Gajanan Desai, (2) H. L. Hutchinson, (3) H. S. Jhabwalla, (4) Radharaman Mitra, (5) Kedarnath Sehgal, (6) Gobinda Ramachandra Kastle, (7) Gouri Shankar, (8) Lakshman Rao Kadam and (9) Arjun Atmaram Alve, were acquitted on all the charges by the Court.

The sentences passed against (1) Ajodhya Prasad, (2) Puran Chandra Joshi, (3) Gopal Basak, (4) Dr. Gangadhar Adhikari, and (5) Shamsul Huda under Section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code were upheld but considering the sentence already undergone by each of them as sufficient punishment the Court ordered their release.

The sentence passed against Gopen Chakravarty was reduced to seven months. This was a strange order, for Gopen Chakravarty had meanwhile been granted 20 days' remission, so that he exceeded his actual term by a few days before the Court's order could reach the jail.

The sentences passed against (1) Muzaffar Ahmad, (2) S.A. Dange, and (3) Shaukat Usmani were reduced to rigorous imprisonment for three years.

Philip Spratt's sentence was reduced to rigorous imprisonment for two years.

The sentences passed against (1) S.V. Ghate, (2) K.N. Joglekar, (3) R.S. Nimbkar, (4) B.F. Bradley, (5) S.S. Mirajkar, (6) Sohan Singh Josh, (7) Dharanikanta Goswami, and (8) Mir Abdul Majid were reduced in each case to rigorous imprisonment for one year. The period of remission already earned by them was taken into account and all of them were released sometime in November 1933.

The four-and-half-year-old Meerut Conspiracy Case actually ended on August 3, 1933, when the High Court delivered its judgement. The sentences passed by the Sessions Court had been unexpectedly severe. Equally unexpected were the reductions, ordered by the High Court. There was no question, any more, of preferring an appeal to the Privy Council.

About the reason behind the reduction of our sentences upon appeal to the High Court, Prof. Michael Brecher of Canada writes in "Nehru : A Political Biography":

"The sentences were reduced later, under the pressure of the British Trade Union Congress and others" (Page 136)

The statement is undoubtedly true. It was not merely workers all over the world who carried on agitation against our trial and conviction, even intellectuals like Romain Rolland and Prof. Einstein, the internationally renowned scientist, raised their voices in protest against the Case.

Prof. Brecher has quoted the following extract from the secret report of 1935, entitled "India and Communism", made by the Central Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India. ".....The removal of the thirty leading Communist agitators from the political arena was immediately followed by a marked improvement in the industrial situation. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the arrests created a vacuum in the leadership of the (Trade Union) movement which was filled by very inferior material".

The Central Bureau of Intelligence may smack its lips in self-approbation as much it likes, but the truth is . the Meerut Conspiracy Case turned out to be a political defeat for the British Government in India and a victory for the Indian Communists. The way the Communists broadcast their ideology from the court-room at Government's expense has few parallels in history. Their removal from the field of actual movement far from creating a vacuum gave them, on the contrary, the opportunity of establishing through propaganda the Communist Party on firm foundations in India. The propaganda the Communist accused carried on from the court-room led to re-thinking among the leaders of the terrorist movements and they joined the Communist Party in large numbers even before the end of the 1930's.

Nearly thirty-five years have passed since the General Statement was made in the Meerut Sessions Court. Now that it is available in print, it will be read, I sincerely hope, with earnest attention by people in India and abroad. For Indian Communists of the present generation, this document is an evidence of how the Meerut Prisoners had thought thirty-five years ago.

Calcutta,

MUZAFFAR AHMAD

## **Intelligence Report of the Government of British India about the activities of Communists in India, prior to Institution of The Meerut Conspiracy Case\***

### **The Success of the New Methods**

By the autumn of 1927 the prosecution of the new policy outlined in the previous chapter had provided the Indian Communist Party with a substantial stock of new leaders, and the stage was thus set for the next step in the struggle which Moscow desired. An attempt will, therefore, now be made to show how, after the comparative failure of M. N. Roy's machinations to achieve any tangible results, the new methods met with surprising success and brought about simultaneous upheavals in several of India's industrial centres.

The combined (though not necessarily co-ordinated, for internecine jealousies still persisted to some extent) efforts of all the elements described produced a remarkable and rapid increase of Communist influence in Labour circles generally and in the trade-unions movement in particular. By April 1928, the penetration of the trade-unions movement was so complete that the extremists, as represented by the Workers' and Peasants' Parties, had not only secured a voice in the control of the movement, but had obtained—particularly in Bombay—a definite hold over the workers themselves. The influence of the moderate element decreased in proportion until, before the end of the year, control had passed almost entirely into the extremists' hands. (Indeed, "control" is hardly the appropriate word, for the Communist leaders had, by their reckless advocacy of the doctrines of Lenin, soon brought into being forces which they were quite incapable of controlling.) Communism had become

*\*(Excerpts from INDIA AND COMMUNISM Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau Home Department Government of India 1933 Revised up to 1935 Chapter 14 Approach to Meerut)*

more to India than the wordy vapourings of a few unbalanced semi-intellectuals. The oft-reiterated policy—"First disturb the masses' placid contentment and then inculcate the principles of Communism"—was being pursued with vigour under the able guidance alike of European emissaries and trained indigenous workers.

### **The Intermediate Stages of Communism in Operation**

When, therefore, discontent reared its head amongst the cotton workers in Bombay at the beginning of 1928, and amongst the railway employees at Lillooah a few weeks later, the Workers' and Peasants' Parties were able to take full and speedy advantage of the opportunities so presented. Three years' Communist theory was rapidly translated into practice, first in Bombay, then in Bengal, and later, to a lesser extent, in Upper India, until it became evident that a handful of agitators had succeeded in temporarily paralysing essential services and important industries to the serious inconvenience, if not actual danger, of the law-abiding population of the areas affected. Riots became the order of the day; savage onslaughts were several times made upon the police; loyal workers were terrorised into submission by stray assaults and by threats of starvation; organised attacks were made upon property; and every effort was made, both by speeches and by printed propaganda, to stir up hatred, not only against the servants of the Crown, but also against the employers of labour, the landowners and the money-lenders. As the campaign progressed, Philip Spratt, in earnest pursuance of the avowed policy of the Communist International, sought other fields to conquer. Having failed to turn to good account some alleged grievances of the Mymensingh peasantry, he enlisted the assistance of Sohan Singh "Josh" in an attempt to plant the seeds of revolt in the Punjab. In this he was hardly more successful though a Peasants' and Workers' Party was formed in that province which passed a number of objectionable resolutions, some of which contained an exhortation to the public to refuse to pay land revenue and canal-water rates, while, at the Party conference which was held in Lyallpur in the autumn of 1928. Communist doctrines were proclaimed with greater candour than

on any previous public occasion. It was Spratt's untiring energy, too, that brought into being a Workers' and Peasants' Party in the United Provinces which held its inaugural conference at Meerut in October 1928. The speeches were extremely objectionable, and Spratt himself openly preached direct action against the landlords and the Government. Within a month branches had been formed in Delhi, Meerut, Gorakhpur, Jhansi and Allahabad.

### **An Appreciation of Spratt's Activities**

Spratt also visited many other towns in India on a similar mission and, in the words of the Bench of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad which later heard the appeal in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, "he threw himself whole-heartedly into Indian Communist politics". In all his actions he showed an honesty and tenacity of purpose which were worthy of a better cause. His attitude is, perhaps, best summed up in his own words, taken from his statement before the Court of Session at Meerut, "I did what I could to carry out the policy of the Communist International, in the name of the British working-class and of the Communist Party, by co-operation with what I thought was the only body actively and effectively working for the national revolution in India at that time, that is, the Workers' and Peasants' Party". To him and Muzaffar Ahmad is due in very great measure the striking success which attended the Party's efforts during 1928 and the spring of 1929. It has been written with authority that "Spratt in particular was ubiquitous. He worked in 1927 mainly with the Bombay group, in 1928 with the Bengal Party. He played a large part in uniting the Punjab groups into one party and in the formation of those in the United Provinces into another. And all the time he was carrying on correspondence with the conspirators on the Continent and in England, informing them of the progress of the work, discussing difficulties, receiving instructions, while those conspirators in turn were receiving instructions, and, what is more, financial aid, for India from the head of the conspiracy in Moscow. Second only to him, was Muzaffar Ahmad, who, however autocratic he may have been, managed by voluminous correspondence to keep in touch not only with the workers abroad but also with all the other workers in India and saw to it that none was idle".



**Spratt's Colleagues and Lieutenants**

Much the same could be said of half a hundred others who, if they lacked Spratt's ability, were seriously infected by his energy and enthusiasm. The names of Shaukat Usmani, Muzaffar Ahmad and S. A. Dange have already been mentioned and their owners need no further introduction unless it be to say that their activities in the period between their release from the Cawnpore jail and the institution of the Meerut case, and their statements in the latter case, have revealed them in the light of incorrigible opponents of the existing order—"Communists standing fully pledged to the Communist programme." They are the only three of the Meerut convicts who have not regained their liberty at the time of writing, and any student of their past history will view the day of their release with considerable concern. Limitations of space prevent me from recording here the names of any but a select few of the others, but the histories of most of them may be read in the annals of the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

**The Bombay Group**

The ablest of Spratt's colleagues was Dr G. M. Adhikari, who was sent to India only at the end of 1928 after having lived for some years in Germany. Prior to his return, he had been in close association with M. N. Roy and other Communists abroad and came back to the country of his birth with adequate credentials and with the avowed intention of furthering 'the aims and objects of the Communist International through the operations of the Communist Party of India and the Workers' and Peasants' Party. Although his arrest followed so quickly on his return that he had little or no time to demonstrate his practical ability as an organiser, he was instantly recognised by his fellow conspirators as a "specialist in organisation and tactics" and has, since 1929, both in and out of jail, given ample proof of his capabilities in this direction and as a draughtsman of theoretical theses and instructions for secret work. Other important members of the Bombay group were R. S. Nimbkar, S. S. Mirajkar and K. N. Joglekar. All three were members of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of India and took a prominent part in the foundation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party in Bombay, the

two last-named having acted as joint editors of the *Kranti*, the Party organ, while Mirajkar and Nimbkar each performed the duties of secretary for some time. Each played a most active part in the strikes in Bombay in 1928 and the tone of the numerous speeches which they then delivered (Nimbkar alone claims to have made five hundred or more) showed clearly that their aim was to use the strikes as a means to a Communist end—for the preparation of revolution. None of them made any secret of their aims when they were arraigned at Meerut. Mirajkar eventually succeeded Nimbkar as the group leader in charge of education and propaganda when the latter took charge of the peasants' group. Joglekar's chief work was in the Trade-Unions and the Indian National Congress, whose session in Gauhati he attended at the end of 1926 as a representative of the Communist Party of India.

### **B. F. Bradley**

But the strikes in Bombay in 1928 would certainly not have reached the pitch they did had it not been for the advice and active encouragement which B. F. Bradley gave to his Indian collaborators. The evidence produced in the Meerut case shows that he took an active interest as a "Communist fraction" in a number of unions (particularly the G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union and the B. B. and C. I. Railway Union), and that he also played a large part in the organisation and conduct of the textile strike and in the formation of unions of Port Trust and railway employees, municipal workers, oil workers and tramwaymen in Bombay and later, of jute workers and transport workers in Bengal as well. He came to India with the claim that, "the only way out of the present-day world economic crisis is the revolutionary way—capitalism must be smashed and socialism built up from the ruins thereof"—and he later admitted in his statement before the Sessions Court that all his activities had been in accordance with that theory.

### **S. V. Ghate**

Mention must also be made of S. B. Ghate who, though he was a member of the Bombay group, served in reality a wider area. If a distinction can be made between the Bombay and Bengal groups it is that the former was closer to the Communist Party of

India and the latter to the Workers' and Peasants' Party, and Ghate, in Bombay, fulfilled much the same functions as Muzaffar Ahmad, as the general secretary of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and editor of its organ, the *Ganavani*, did in Calcutta. A Communist since the first conference in Cawnpore in 1925, Ghate's best work for the Party was done in a secretarial capacity. First as a joint secretary, and later as the general secretary, of the Communist Party of India, his main responsibility was the maintenance of the line of communication with Communists abroad, without which the Indian movement could never have subsisted. He was naturally also in the closest touch with those who were carrying out Moscow's instructions in different parts of the country, and his activities in these directions made it necessary for him to equip himself with a series of cover addresses, many of which were discovered when his belongings were searched at the time of his arrest. He may, in fact, be described as having been the linchpin of that subversive movement which he himself described as being 'the dynamic force which organises the workers by participating in their daily struggle, and leads them to the final seizure of power'. It was said of him in the committal order in the Meerut case that, Ghate, like a Ghost, was pervasive but not tangible. His influence was great and his name comes everywhere, but he worked mainly behind the scenes. One gets an impression that he deliberately kept out of local activities so as to be the more free for his secretarial duties.

### **The Calcutta Group**

The group in Bombay formed so close a corporation that the records of their individual activities made a more or less connected story, but the Bengal group was much less of a happy family, was unable to command so large a share of the foreign resources as its sister group in Bombay and was composed, on the whole, of less able individuals. It was probably for these reasons that Spratt made Calcutta his headquarter from the middle of 1928 till his arrest in March of the following year. The ablest of his lieutenants in Bengal (apart, of course, from Muzaffar Ahmad) was probably Shibnath Banerji, the Judas Iscariot of the Meerut case. Having acquired a full working knowledge of Communist aims and methods by a course of training in the

Eastern University in Moscow, Banerji returned to Bengal in 1926, and quickly came into association, first with George Allison, and later with such men as Philip Spratt and Gopendra Nath Chakravarty, whose history is written in Chapter 20. Banerji lent to this latter group of Communists his untiring support and services throughout the serious industrial trouble which swept Calcutta and its environs during 1928 and also played a not inconsiderable part in the organisation of unions of railwaymen, mill workers, tramwaymen, etc. He also travelled further afield to Asansol, Jharia and Ishapore, at which latter place he helped Spratt to form an Ordnance Workers' Union composed of workers in the Government Rifle Factory and became its first Vice-president. He was eventually acquitted in the Meerut Case, but the Judge described the evidence against him as "a formidable record" and went on to say "In my opinion there remains room for the gravest suspicion in his case, but I cannot feel quite convinced that he was ever a member of this conspiracy. I, therefore, give him the benefit of the doubt." Of Shamsul Huda, another important member of the Bengal group the Sessions Judge remarked that "It is true that the case against Shamsul Huda, accused, is not based on a very long period of work or a very large number of activities, but we have it that he was a member of the Communist Party of India and a member of the All India Workers' and Peasants' Party" (He was incidentally a member of the Central Executive Committee of the former body.) In his statement to the Court Shamsul Huda gloried in his membership of these bodies and took as his own the concluding sentences of Marx and Engels' earliest manifesto. Communists scorn to hide their views and aims: they openly declare that their purposes can only be achieved by the forcible overthrow of the whole extant social order. The activities of which the trying Judge made mention included several highly seditious speeches delivered at times of great political excitement, active participation in at least one strike and underground work amongst transport workers and dock workers.

### **Gopal Basak**

Mention has already been made of Spratt's abortive efforts to organise the peasants in the north of the Mymensingh district and it now seems necessary to refer briefly to Gopal Chandra Basak, who acted as Spratt's agent in Eastern Bengal. Of poor physique and a

studious disposition, Basak's chief importance was as the Party's depot for Communist literature. His father is a bookseller in Dacca and Gopal Chandra himself assisted in the business and had, therefore, peculiar facilities for this type of work, and there is no doubt that the leaders all over India found this bookshop most useful. But Basak's activities were not confined to the production and dissemination of literature. He was also given a good deal of work in Dacca itself, where he refounded the Dhakeswari Cotton Mill Workers' Union, became its secretary, established study circles for its members, and busied himself with a strike in which Spratt had ordered his participation. He took part, too, in a strike of the local scavengers, and helped Spratt in his peasant activities in Mymensingh mentioned above. Shortly before his arrest, he formulated plans for the establishment of other local unions of railway and jute workers—and there can be no doubt that, had he not been left single-handed (except for a short period when Gopendra Nath Chakravarty was sent to his aid), he would eventually have brought to Dacca trouble quite as serious as Calcutta and Bombay were experiencing during the period in question.

### **The Group in Northern India—P. C. Joshi**

Puran Chand Joshi's chief claim to fame in the Communist world rests on the fact that he proved a capable and energetic general secretary of the branch of the Workers' and Peasants' Party which Spratt inaugurated in the United Provinces at the end of 1928 and which was a thriving fledgling when the Meerut case was instituted. In his capacity as secretary, though still a student at a university, he maintained a considerable correspondence with Spratt and Muzaffar Ahmad on a variety of organisational problems, but his personal inclinations and his age made him concentrate rather on the spreading of the Communist gospel amongst those of his own years and social standing. He himself instituted and maintained a system of study circles as a means of providing "a recruiting ground for future party workers": he also started the *Krantikari* for purposes of propaganda, frequently contributed to it himself, and provided money for its upkeep. Himself an omnivorous reader, he was constantly impressing upon his friends the urgent need for a scientific study of

Communism "so that from the green-room we may step onto the actual stage". This was his main work, but he also put his theoretical studies to practical use in his frequent denunciations of the Indian National Congress and his supervision of the work of those subordinate to him amongst railwaymen, peasants and sweepers, in Delhi and the United Provinces. For all his youth, Joshi was already a confirmed Communist when he was arrested, as several ably written documents found in his possession testified and as his statement before the Court of Session confirmed. "Armed mass insurrection", he said, "is the highest stage of the upward growth of revolution. . . . We, therefore, hail and salute the final armed mass uprising of those who are slaves to-day but will be free after it. . . . The problem which is to be decided, however, is the when and the how of the armed insurrection." It was to this problem that Joshi was vigorously applying his mind in the United Provinces and Delhi, and his untiring energy and the correctness of his "ideology" eventually found him a place on the National Executive Committee of the All India Workers' and Peasants' Party. His desperate and indefatigable enthusiasm for the Communist cause and all that it stands for is rivalled only by that of Philip Spratt, his guide and mentor, and on that account alone, Joshi must be regarded as one of the most dangerous of those whom the Meerut case fortunately and opportunistically removed from the scene of their activities.

### **Punjabi Leaders**

A reference has already been made to Sohan Singh "Josh", and it only remains here to dispose of the case of another Punjabi worker, Abdul Majid. Majid became a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of India in 1925 after a visit to Russia, and, from then onwards, he took a prominent part in the organisation and operations of the *Kirti Kisan* Party, and of the *Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha* of later notoriety. He assisted Spratt in the formation of the United Provinces and Delhi branch of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of which P. C. Joshi later assumed control, and was largely instrumental in the establishment of a Press Workers' Union in Lahore. All his actions were in consonance with his subsequent statement before the Court of Session—"I wholeheartedly sympathise with the scientific

programme of the Communist International which it has put before the world for a world revolution      We Communists in India are making efforts to bring about this revolution "

### **The Limitations of the Preceding Sketches**

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the "potted histories" given above are merely intended to provide a little detailed description of some of the chief actors on the Communist stage and that they speak of only an infinitesimal part of the activities proved in the Meerut case against the individuals concerned. No reference has been made, for instance, to the cryptic and other letters which they wrote to each other and to their friends in London and Moscow, or to the funds which they received from abroad, or, in fact, to many others of the ingredients of the colossal conspiracy which it took many months for the police and the courts to unravel. Some of these subjects will be dealt with in a little more detail in the next two chapters, and my aim here has been solely to introduce to such of my readers as are unacquainted with them, a few personalities whose names will recur if not in this volume, at any rate in the daily press when serious industrial or agrarian trouble next breaks out in India.

### **A Summary of Achievements**

By the end of 1928, therefore, there was hardly a single public utility service or industry which had not been affected, in whole or in part, by the wave of Communism which swept the country during the year. Transport, industrial and agricultural workers of every description, clerks, policemen, colliers and even scavengers were amongst the many who were subjected to, if they did not fall under, the baneful influence of this whirlwind propaganda campaign which promised them the sweets of revolution if they would but raise their hands to grasp them.

### **The Youth Movement**

Even youths of all classes were to be harnessed to the Communist car of destruction, and a network of study classes made its appearance alongside the shop and factory committees which the campaign had brought into being, with the object of training leaders from the rank and file. Of these S V Ghatge wrote at the end of 1928

that, "the work under the youth section is conducted in the form of classes in which students have been taking part. These classes have not met with sufficient response " But although the Party did not meet with any very tangible success in this direction, yet Spratt, assisted by Dharani Goswami, P C. Joshi and others, had laid, by painstaking labours before his arrest, the foundations of an efficient youth movement which included a youth section of the Workers' and Peasants' Party known as the Young Comrades' League. To this particular part of the campaign Jawaharlal Nehru, the son of the veteran Congress worker, the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, lent a ready hand. Speaking at the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference in Poona at the end of 1928, he said : "We must aim at the destruction of all imperialism, and the reconstruction of society on another basis. That basis must be one of co-operation, which is another name for socialism. Our national ideal must, therefore, be the establishment of a co-operative socialist commonwealth and our international ideal a world federation of socialist States. The Voice that claims freedom must be the voice of revolt. When that voice is raised, England will bow to the inevitable."

### **The Effect on the Indian National Congress**

Such words from a prominent Congressman were, unfortunately, typical of the general attitude of Congress workers of the day. The session of the All India National Congress which was convened in Calcutta in December 1928, reflected this pandering spirit. More than in any previous Congress, the Calcutta gathering showed an anxiety to appease the extremists. Resolutions were passed condemning the Public Safety Bill and the Trades' Disputes Bill, which were then on the legislative anvil, and it was decided that the Congress should take up the organisation of the workers and peasants as a part of its future programme of constructive work for non-co-operation. Some Communists even secured places on the All India Congress Committee. While the Calcutta Congress was sitting, a huge demonstration of some 30,000 labourers marched in procession with red banners and took possession of the enclosure in spite of the protests of the Congress leaders. The labourers held a demonstration which lasted for over an hour before they were



finally induced to depart. The incident was symbolic, not only of the Communists' hostility to mere "non-violent" nationalism, but also of the enormous increase in the influence and powers of organisation of the working-classes under Communist direction.

### The Effect on the Communists Themselves

The degree of confidence which Indian Communists derived from the events of 1928 is well demonstrated by the proceedings of the first conference of the All India Workers' and Peasants Party held in Calcutta at the end of the year. Prior to the conference the Party had, as a whole, been working under a cloak, its policy and intentions being merely to permeate the ranks of the more important organisations, but in Calcutta it took up a defiant line of attack. In order to prepare the peasants for revolution, the Party would place before them a programme of their immediate needs of life. For the workers there would be a policy of strengthening the trade-unions movement by all means, on the basis of forward economic and political demands and by resort to direct action.

All occasions were to be seized to draw the workers into political action by demonstrative means, strikes, etc. While acknowledging the tactical utility of non-violence, the Party made no fetish of it though it agreed that the methods of secret preparation for an armed uprising were unsuited to conditions in India as they then were. In short, the Party's immediate objective, as revealed at these meetings, was the creation of an aggressive mentality among the workers, the peasants and the petty *bourgeoisie* with a view to bringing about a violent revolution, first of a political and then of a social and economic kind. It should, perhaps, be added, in view of what is said later on about M. N. Roy's letter of instructions, that of the sixteen persons who were then elected to the National Executive Committee (four each from Bombay, Bengal, the Punjab and the United Provinces) no less than ten were either members of the Communist Party of India or admittedly Communists by conviction. The Party also affiliated itself to the League against Imperialism.

Even when the usual allowances are made for the excessive exuberance which such occasions engender, there is still no doubt that a year's successful work, coupled with a lavish display of foreign interest, had enormously increased the prestige and confidence of the members of the Communist Party of India and

had encouraged them to make still further efforts in pursuit of their goal. Four years later, a Communist paper published in England contained the following note : "During the strike struggles of 1928-29 the workers of India emerged as a political force, a development of immense significance, and took an active part in the nation-wide struggle for independence. A new milestone was thus reached : the workers had realised for the first time their revolutionary role among the various forces for national emancipation."

### **Neglect of the Communist Party of India**

But, though the Workers' and Peasants' Party had gone from strength to strength, there had been little or no sign of real activity on the part of its parent body, the Communist Party of India. The absence of evidence of the underground activities of a secret organisation such as the C.P.I. might, of course, have been due to a variety of causes; but documents which were later exhibited at Meerut made it obvious that the Party's members had concentrated so much effort on the building up of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and on the conduct of its subsequent activities that, the C.P.I. had perforce been almost entirely neglected. Small wonder that C.P. Dutt cryptically complained that "the Methodists and the Y.M.C.A. are becoming too much two names for the same thing.": To such a pass had things come in May 1928, that Ghate seriously suggested that the Workers' and Peasants' Party should control the Communist Party—a complete reversal of the orthodox procedure prescribed in Moscow. The constitution and programme of the C.P.I. had, it is true, been formulated in May 1927, and an executive committee was in existence and had met at Madras six months later, but drastic reorganisation was clearly necessary. At the urgent instance of both M.N. Roy and the Comintern, therefore, a new effort was made in December 1928 when all the interested persons had gathered in Calcutta for the All India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference. But before I attempt, to describe what steps were taken, it is desirable to give some idea of the orthodox relations (laid down in Moscow) between the Communist Party of India and the Workers' and Peasants' Parties. This can best be done by exhibiting a working summary of a document which fell into the hands of the Calcutta police in the summer of 1928.

### The Assembly Letter

The document in question is generally known as the Assembly Letter because it was read out in the course of a debate in the Legislative Assembly on the 10th September 1928. Without going into the somewhat involved evidence on the subject, we may accept the findings of the Sessions Court at Meerut that it was written by M N Roy as a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in Moscow, that it was dispatched through Clemens Palme Dutt in London, and that Muzaffar Ahmad, to whom it was addressed, probably received another copy of it by a different route. It was dated the 30th December 1927 and was, therefore, the last of a series of historic documents of its kind which came from Roy's pen. The letter was originally assigned to 'Central Committee Workers' and Peasants' Party', but the heading had been amended to read, "Central Committee C P and Workers' and Peasants' Party". The main subjects with which it dealt were (1) the organisation of the C P I and the W P P and their interrelation, (2) international affiliation, (3) the co-ordination of the activities of these Parties with those of the emigrant section, and (4) financial matters.

### Party Organisation

After remarking on the need for making known to the masses what it is that they really want— the Communists will become the trusted leaders of the masses only by giving concrete form to the latter's unconscious demands"— Roy proceeded to lay down some general principles applicable to India and to explain the precise necessity of participation by the members of the Communist Party in the daily struggle. But neither Roy nor the Communist International, on whose behalf he was almost certainly writing, was under any delusions as to the legality of such participation, for the letter went on to point out that legality could only be had at the expense of the *raison d'être* of the Party—"Every little act of a real Communist is a blow to Imperialism and the Imperialist knows it therefore, if the Communist does not act secretly he must pass his life in prison." Roy insisted, therefore, on the formation of an illegal Communist Party, but as legality is an essential prerequisite to the

conduct of effective propaganda amongst the masses, a Workers' and Peasants Party must also be built up to take the place of the Communist Party when the latter becomes illegal and to make open preparations for the great day when the Communist Party can assume the leadership of the open revolution. This "veiled Communist Party" was to be 'a much broader organisation, a rallying ground of all exploited social elements (proletariat, peasantry and petty *bourgeoisie*)'. The Communists should enter the WPP however and by virtue of their being the "conscious vanguard of the working-class", they would be the driving force behind it. There followed a draft of the new Party's programme of which Roy wrote that 'the social elements ready to fight for this programme are not all necessarily Communists and never will be Communists but organised in the WPP they will be under the influence of the proletariat and be led by the CP without subscribing to its programme of Socialism'. It is obvious that a Party so constructed stands a better chance of evading the clutches of the law than a full-blooded Communist Party and it was for this reason that Roy added a word of criticism of the organisation as it then was. The Workers and Peasants Party was too openly identified with the Communist Party. It is publicly known, he wrote, that practically all the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party are the leaders of the Workers and Peasants Party. Of course, in fact it should be so, but the cat has been unnecessarily let out of the bag by publishing the list of the CC of the CP. This defect must be rectified and the new committee of the All India Workers and Peasants Party (of about a dozen members) should contain a majority of trade-unions leaders under Communist influence as a guarantee that the Party will develop in the right direction. I have already shown that these instructions were faithfully carried out at the WPP Congress in Calcutta in December 1928.

### **International Affiliation**

On the second main question Roy wrote 'As far as the Workers and Peasants Party is concerned the question is answered: it should affiliate itself with the League Against Imperialism. That will serve

our purpose Through that you will have the relations and aid you need, but you will not be condemned of having relations with Moscow The WPP can eventually become the recognised organ of the League in India " Of the Communist Party of India, the letter said "The C P must unquestionably be a section of the Communist International It is practically treated as such , but no formal request to this effect has yet come from our Party in India A Communist Party must be an organic part of the World Communist Organisation It cannot be otherwise and call itself 'Communist' Those who smell foreign dictation in this organisational principle of a body that carries on a relentless struggle throughout the world, are not Communists They have a faulty conception of the international nature of the class-struggle Roy then proceeded to stigmatize affiliation (suggested by Saklatvala and Donald Campbell) with the Minority Movement in Great Britain as improper and asserted that the correct position was that the centres in Berlin and Paris are the agencies of the Communist International to look after Indian affairs the C P of India will have its relations with the Communist International through these centres and not through London

### **The Foreign Bureau**

Roy then passed on to the third main subject of his letter of which he treated in the following words Indian Communists in emigration are members of the Communist Party of India and are automatically members of the Workers and Peasants Party and we expect to be treated by the comrades at home as such We should not be looked upon as outsiders who could serve you only as financial agents As members of the same Party nationally and internationally we must co-ordinate our efforts He then went on to explain how this should be done through the Foreign Bureau which was the organ of the Communist Party of India abroad This Bureau had three members, namely 'the comrade in Paris' (Muhammad Ali *alias* Sepassi) Clemens Palme Dutt and Roy himself The Bureau's functions included the publication of the *Masses of India* (Roy's paper which was finding its way into India in large quantities at that time) the production of Marxist literature

specially for India, and the education of Party members abroad. It was also to act as the organ through which the Communist International would guide the activities of its Indian section. The Bureau had been set up as the result of a resolution passed by the Communist Party of India in May 1927, but Roy was by no means satisfied with the security of its position and asked the Party to signify its assent to the state of affairs outlined above, "in order that all possibilities of misunderstanding and conflict will be eliminated for the future"

### **Financial Aid from Moscow**

The last section of this highly interesting letter dealt with 'the financial matter' a subject which will be discussed in somewhat greater detail in Chapter 16 "Arrangements have been made " Roy wrote "to continue the aid for the three papers and also for the monthly in the North if necessary Besides provision has also been made for the other necessities specified in a report received two months ago

This is a temporary arrangement and things will be in a better shape in the New Year (i.e., 1928) The new arrangement will be according to a plan which will be communicated to you in due time Meanwhile I may mention that the plan will include the publication by the WPP of a series of small pamphlets dealing elementarily with the theoretical and organisational questions of working class politics "

The Calcutta Meeting of the Communist Party of India, When therefore the various members of the Communist Party met in Calcutta in December 1928 they had before them the outline of their future programme A new central executive was first elected and the meeting then considered the various items on the agenda The main decisions were to make the Party active and to do propaganda in the name of the C P I to affiliate to the Communist International to adopt the Colonial Thesis of the Comintern as the basis for work and to send Muzaffar Ahmad to Moscow as a delegate to the Executive Committee of the Communist International A revised constitution was subsequently issued which differed materially from the earlier one It began by describing the Party as a section of the Communist International and then

categorically stated that the Party's object was "the attainment of socialism.....in accordance with the programme of the Communist International and the policy adopted from time to time by the Party with the agreement of the Communist International". Roy's instructions had thus been obeyed to the letter. The Party's next meetings were held in Bombay on the 17th to the 19th March 1929 when Dr. G.M. Adhikari, as the expert in method, presented concrete proposals for further reorganisation which were accepted in theory. The Party was to be organised in five departments (for trade unions, peasants, propaganda, organisational and secretariat development and political control), and a sub-committee was appointed to work out details. On the next day, the majority of the members were arrested and the programme could not be carried into effect.

### **Conclusions**

The non-Marxian Communist Party of India, set up by Satya Bhakta in 1924 while the Cawnpore convicts were still in jail had thus been transformed, step by step, into a body owing full allegiance to the Communist International. This gradual development was guided and closely supervised throughout by the Comintern itself and the formal act of affiliation was the final step in the development of a conspiracy which had begun with the capture of the C.P.I. at the Cawnpore Conference in December 1925. But this part of the conspiracy was in itself less serious than the formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties which were expressly designed to throw dust in the eyes of the thinking public, and lest the word "Communist" should frighten people away. So long as the Communists remained in the background of these organisations, Moscow's purpose was fully served.

## **THE MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE**

### **Preliminaries**

On the 20th March 1929, thirty-one of the most important leaders in India, including Spratt, Bradley, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani and Dange, were arrested in different parts of the country and charged with conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India. Hutchinson was arrested a few weeks

later and his name added to the list of those to be prosecuted. The charges made on behalf of the Crown were supported by a vast mass of documentary evidence, the like of which has probably never been handled in a single case in the whole history of Indian legal practice, for the very comprehensive search operations which were simultaneously carried out prior to the institution of the case, had been productive of every conceivable form of concomitant to an open campaign backed by a secret organisation. Communist books and papers, leaflets and other literature, letters couched in cryptic terms or written in invisible ink, plans of campaign and codes and ciphers for use in communication with agencies in foreign lands were amongst the documents seized and later exhibited before the courts.

### **A summary of the charges**

The great authority which so accurate and exact (to use the High Court's phrase) a document as the Judgement of the Court of Session gives to my pen has caused me to turn to it for much of the material on which the previous chapter was based, and I do not propose to go much further into the ramifications of this extremely involved case, which embraces a large variety of personalities and organisations, many of which have since ceased to be of importance. It is in fact my intention to do no more than give a resume of the charges made by the Crown before three successive courts—one of preliminary inquiry, the other of Session and the third of Appeal—and of those courts' general findings and to follow this up by commenting as briefly as possible on three or four aspects of the case which seem to be of more than ephemeral importance. My first object can best be achieved by quoting from the concluding lines of the finding of the lower Court which finished its hearing of the case on the 14th January 1930. It has been definitely proved that (1) the Communist International was founded in 1919, with its headquarter at Moscow, as the supreme head of all Communist Organisations throughout the world, (2) its chief aim is to establish workers' republics in every country, (3) for this purpose it has as its fixed policy the exciting of violent revolution in all countries,



(4) in particular, it has turned its attention to India and determined to cause a revolution which has for its immediate object the overthrow of the sovereignty of the King-Emperor in British India, (5) with this object it has formed a conspiracy with persons and bodies in Europe and India and elsewhere to excite the Indian workers and peasants to revolution, (6) these persons and bodies, whom I may call conspirators, have laid down a general plan of campaign under the direction of the Communist International, (7) this plan includes the formation of such bodies as a Communist Party of India and Workers and Peasants' Parties, (8) the immediate work of these parties is to gain control of the working-classes by organising them in unions teaching them the principles of Communism inciting them to strikes in order to educate them and teach them solidarity, and in every way to use every possible method of propaganda and instruction (9) the workers are thus to be taught mass organisation with a view to the declaration of a general strike followed by revolution (10) the peasants are to be organised in a similar manner so as to form an effective reserve force for the proletarian masses and to effect an agrarian revolution, (11) in pursuance of these aims, a Communist Party of India and four Workers and Peasants Parties, in Bombay, Bengal the Punjab and the United Provinces, were formed (12) these bodies were given financial aid from Moscow and their policy was dictated from Moscow, directly and via England and the Continent through communications conducted in a secret and conspiratorial manner (13) in addition to this several persons, such as Allison, Spratt and Bradley were sent out to India for the express purpose of organising the work and fomenting revolution, (14) in pursuance of these directions and with the financial help thus obtained these bodies have organised unions, conducted demonstrations, edited papers instituted youth movements initiated and conducted strikes and used all possible methods of propaganda, (15) their express aim in all these activities has been to overthrow the sovereignty of the King in British India, with a view to the establishment of a socialist State under the dictatorship of the proletariat and the supreme command of the Communist International, (16) in these activities all the accused with the exception of Dharamvir Singh, are shown

to have taken part with full knowledge and approval of their aims and objects, and directly or indirectly in league with the conspirators outside India; (17) they have, therefore, formed part of the conspiracy to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty of British India and are liable to be tried under section 121-A, I.P.C."

### **The Sentences**

The Additional Sessions Judge who took up the hearing of the case sixteen days later pronounced judgement on the 16th January 1933, sentencing all but four of the thirty-one accused persons to varying terms of transportation and rigorous imprisonment. One D. R. Thengdi had died some four months previously whilst on bail in Poona and three Bengalis were acquitted. Of the persons with whom this book is particularly concerned, Muzaffar Ahmad (of the Cawnpore conspiracy case) was sentenced to transportation for life. S.A. Dange (also convicted at Cawnpore in 1924), S.V. Ghatge, K. N. Jogalekar, R. S. Nimbkar and Philip Spratt to twelve years' transportation. B. F. Bradley, S. S. Mirajkar and Shaukat Usmani (a third of the Cawnpore conspirators) to ten years' transportation. Abdul Majid and Sohag Singh Josh (Spratt's agents in the Punjab) and Dharani Goswami (who will make his appearance in Chapter 20) to seven years' transportation and Dr. G. M. Adhikari and P. C. Joshi to five years transportation; while Gopen Chakravarty (who also figures prominently in Chapter 20), Gopal Basak and Lester Hutchinson were sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of four and Shamsul Huda of three years. Chapter 17 will show how Amir Haidar Khan, an absconding accused in this case, was laid by the heels in Madras during 1932 and sentenced to an aggregate of thirty months' rigorous imprisonment.

### **The Scope of the Conspiracy**

In the course of a judgement consisting of close on seven hundred printed foolscap pages, the Sessions Judge accepted the main conclusions of the Lower Court and found that the Communist International in Russia aimed at bringing about a revolution or revolutions for the overthrow of existing Governments by means

of armed risings and at the establishment of Soviet Republics in their place, that India had been selected as a suitable field for their operations and as being one of the most likely places for the next step forward for the world revolution, that the methods included the incitement of antagonism between capital and labour, the encouragement of strikes, *hartals* and similar demonstrations, and the creation and development of organisations, superficially for the benefit of their members, but in reality worked for the purpose of promoting the Communist programme, and that the twenty-seven persons whom he later convicted had taken part, together with others not brought before his Court, in conspiracy which aimed at depriving the King of the sovereignty of British India

### **Outside Assistance**

On the subject of those who were not produced before him—and they included M N Roy, Khushi Muhammad (*alias* Muhammad Ali, *alias* Sepassi), George Allison (*alias* Donald Campbell), J F Ryan (the Australian Communist) Clemens Palme Dutt, Shapurji Saklatvala the late R C L Sharma of Pondichery and V N Chattopadhyaya amongst some fifty others—the Judge has written 'I am quite satisfied that all these persons are linked in one way or another with this conspiracy along with many other persons whose names will be found scattered here and there through the record and through this judgement. These persons were all rightly described by the prosecution at an early stage in this case as co-conspirators and there can be no doubt that the same description can very correctly be applied to the absconding accused, Amir Haidar Khan and to the late D R Thengdi, accused who has died during the period of five months which the writing of this judgement has taken. In addition to these individuals there are also certain organisations in regard to which it is proved either that they have taken part in this conspiracy as organisations or that the persons who controlled them have used them for conspiratorial purposes. Such organisations are the Communist International and its affiliated bodies, the Krestintern or Peasants International, the Red International of Labour Unions or R.I.L.U. the Communist

Party of Great Britain, the National Minority Movement, the Workers' Welfare League of India, the Labour Research Department, the Young Communist League of Great Britain, the Indian Seamen's Union, the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat and, last but by no means least, the League Against Imperialism "

### **Revision on Appeal**

All twenty-seven convicts duly appealed against their conviction to sentences to the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad, a bench of which took up the hearing of the case on the 24th July 1933. Judgement was delivered on the 3rd August by the Chief Justice who thus summed up the findings of the Court "It cannot be too clearly that in this case the Government has not prosecuted anyone for his opinions. The gravamen of the charge—which as regards a large majority of the accused has been proved—is that they have endeavoured to put their opinions into practice, the inevitable result of their action is that the accused have brought themselves within the scope of section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. It may be said that the object aimed at the conspiracy was impracticable one might even say impossible, of achievement. The steps taken by the accused till their arrest were in one sense utterly puerile and could not be conceived to lead to any such serious consequences as the accused dreamt of. But one reason why nothing substantial was done by the accused was the alertness and strict vigilance of the police, who were able to discover the conspiracy at an early stage and constantly watched the conduct of all the accused till their arrest. Even if there had been any chance of a partial success in rousing the peasants and workers that was completely frustrated by the effective counteraction adopted by the highly efficient police. The detection of this conspiracy was a difficult matter, and it was very creditable to the Criminal Investigation Department that in spite of every attempt having been made by the accused to conceal their designs and to cover up their communications and correspondence, the police managed to find out practically everything that the accused did or that passed between them "

Then followed a homily on the particular gravity of seditions and inflammatory appeals at times of excitement, and the summary concluded with the words : "We must, therefore, take a serious view of the offence of conspiracy committed by the accused whom we find guilty." But taking into consideration the fact that all the accused had already undergone more than four years' confinement before their case came before him, the Chief Justice considerably scaled down the sentences passed in the Sessions Court. This clemency was accompanied, however, by an expression of opinion that if the present offenders proved incorrigible it might be necessary in the public interest to curtail their activities for lengthy periods. The result of the appeal was the immediate release of Hutchinson and eight other lesser, conspirators (all of whom were acquitted and of whom it was written that they had themselves largely to thank for their prosecution, their seditious activities in association with Communists having created a natural suspicion that they were engaged in the conspiracy.) and also of P. C. Joshi, Gopal Basak, Shamsul Huda and Dr. G. M. Adhikari whose sentences were reduced to the terms which they had already undergone. By the end of 1933, all save Spratt, Muzaffar Ahmad, S. A. Dange and Shaukat Usmani had also regained their liberty. Spratt was enlarged in September 1934, and with the release of the three incorrigibles in the autumn of 1935, the curtain will be rung down on the second Act of the Indian Communist drama, and the stage fully set for the third Act, for which rehearsals are now in progress. It is only to be hoped that this third Act, when it comes, will have a less tragic ending than its predecessor. It certainly promises to be more spectacular and to have a quicker tempo.

### **The Duration of the Trial**

Charges of all kinds have been levelled against the authorities in India in connection with the Meerut Case, the protracted course of which has also caused unfavourable comment in circles wholly unconnected with Communism but at the same time unfamiliar with Indian law. It may, therefore, serve a useful purpose to subject these charges to a brief examination. Before doing so, I will take leave to quote a short extract from a letter, written by M. N. Roy shortly after the conclusion of the Cawnpore case in 1924. I do so because it throws light on the frame of mind

in which Moscow's followers go (and, it is to be feared, always will go) to their trial "The news about the result of the Cawnpore case", Roy wrote in November 1924, "reached us yesterday We had not expected any better Poor fellows! If they could only have put up a better defence, four years in jail would have been worth while We must have better Communists than this lot, and the defending Councils (*sic*) By God what fools I! With a better lot in the dock and less stupid heads at the Bar, the Cawnpore case could have been made an epoch-making event in our political history ' The Meerut prisoners have, it must be admitted, extracted (so far as foreign countries are concerned) more of advertisement and political capital from their trial than did their predecessors at Cownpore, or, indeed, than Roy, himself arraigned at Cawnpore in 1931, was able to do The Voluminous discourses on Communist theory and principles (much of them irrelevant to the charges framed) which took the place of statements of defence were published in book form for sale in England or anywhere elsewhere people could be found to read them Jail conditions, which the accused themselves have many times applauded in their letters to their friends, inspired a continual stream of entirely misleading press articles, while the length of the case has always stood Communist editors in good a stead

It seems hardly necessary to quote extensively from that part of the High Court judgement which analysed the causes of delay It will suffice to say that the blame was apportioned in the following words — Had there been greater discrimination in the choice and selection of evidence for the prosecution, a greater restraint by the accused in keeping their statements within the limits of relevancy, and a little more strictness on the part of the Court, the trial would not have taken such a long time ' Of the second of these causes the Chief Justice wrote The accused in their turn took an inordinately long time in reading out well prepared statements which the Court had to take down word for word In most cases they were nothing more than an exposition, on an elaborate scale, of the doctrines of Communism, its tenets and its programme There has been an extravagant waste of time and energy in the dictation and recording of these statements " It may also be remarked that the Sessions Judge had gone very deeply into this matter of delay and had come to the definite conclusion that "out

of the period of three years and ten months during which the accused were under trial, a period of at least a year could certainly have been cut off had the accused not definitely laid themselves out to delay the case whenever they thought it safe to do so." There was further delay of over three months in the hearing of the appeal, which too, was the result of the specific application of the appellants for postponement.

### **The Future**

The proceedings were undoubtedly lengthy, but so have been similar cases elsewhere. The French and the practical Japanese, to quote only two instances, took two and three years, respectively, to dispose of cases of almost identical dimensions in circumstances which gave the accused no opportunities for self-advertisement. When to the masses of evidence adduced is added a consideration of the cumbrous nature of the Indian law, which, in its efforts to prevent injustice, places all the cards in the hands of the accused, and to this is superadded the determination of those accused to extract from the trial the maximum of advertisement for themselves and their doctrines, the length of time which it took to complete the hearing of the case becomes the less surprising. But the case has emphasised the need for speedier, less cumbersome, and less fettered methods of safeguarding India against those who advocate, or work for, armed rebellion in the interests of a foreign power. To allow such individuals freedom of speech and action up to a time when their activities amount to a conspiracy to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty of British India, has been proved to be an expensive and dangerous policy.

### **The Indian Communist Programme**

Enough has, I hope, been said to show the impossibility of legally prosecuting the various parts of the programme of the Communist International in India. As Roy himself once pointed out in connection with the Cawnpore case, "Government do not object to Communism as such, but *applied* Communism is not tolerable to them. It is no longer a dead theory. It invigorates the present political struggle by stimulating the consciousness and energy of the revolutionary social forces." The same realisation is frequently to be found in the statements of the accused in the

Meerut case and it may be of assistance to recapitulate, at this stage, the methods by which Indian Communists have sought (and are likely to seek in the future) to put into practice the instructions which Kuusinen adequately summarized in the words "Modestly and yet perseveringly must we begin in India with the work in the trade-unions and, during strikes, with the education of the Party workers "\* This authoritative dictum was, of course, supplemented, both before and after its pronouncement, by more detailed instructions (such as the Assembly Letter already referred to) dealing not only with trade-unions work but also with operations amongst rural workers and the petty *bourgeoisie*. Many of these documents were produced by the Crown in support of the charges against the accused, and the Crown Counsel gave in his summing up of the case, a list of the tasks and duties of Communists in India derived from an analysis of these exhibits. I reproduce the list as the Crown Counsel gave it. It indicates, as he suggested, some of the obvious items to be looked for in the public activities of the accused in consequence of injunctions made by the Communist International, from time to time "Concentrate on organisation take part in the everyday struggle, do not disregard the smallest demand, draw attention to abuses and help to formulate demands be conspicuous in all strikes and demonstrations, every strike, large or small is a lesson, train leaders from the rank and file inculcate discipline, expose reformists, oppose all phrases about non-violence or passive resistance, deprecate tactfully the influence of religion, denounce capitalists, explain that Government always helps capitalists that it is in fact, a capitalist Government, therefore, denounce Government, introduce political subjects and issues, emphasise that no lasting betterment is possible under the capitalist system, stress, therefore, the necessity of revolution and the establishment of a workers raj create discontent and intensify it where it exists, demonstrate the international character of the class-struggle praise R I L U and denounce Amsterdam, draw illustrations from Russia and China" The Sessions Judge took this able analysis as the basis of his examination and classification of the activities of the accused and found that all the items mentioned were covered either by the

\*Report on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies presented to the VI Congress of the Communist International



evidence on the record or by the admissions made in the statements of the accused

### Other Items in the Programme

To the above summary of the general and industrial programme there should, perhaps, be added a short quotation which seems generally, though adequately, to cover the agrarian and petty *bourgeois* sides of this question. Coming to the colonial and semi-colonial countries (China, India, etc.), the Communist International lays it down\* that "the principal task in such countries is on the one hand, to fight against feudalism and the pro capitalist forms of exploitation and systematically to develop the peasant agrarian revolution, on the other hand to fight against foreign imperialism for national independence. As a rule transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat in these countries will be possible only through a series of preparatory stages and as the outcome of the whole period of transformation of *bourgeois* democratic revolution into socialist revolution. Tampering with the loyalty of the troops comes at a more mature stage in the proceedings, a stage which those with whom we are now concerned had fortunately not reached when the Meerut case began. We can, therefore, leave this aspect of the case out of the reckoning for the moment.

### Violent Methods of Revolution

Another question which the Meerut case has effectively answered is one which is often asked. Is Indian Communism based on violence? Earlier chapters have demonstrated how the revolution which the Communist International seeks to bring about is what Philip Spratt once described as a violent upheaval of a political and military character—revolution in the good old-fashioned sense. To the authorities already quoted I need only add a few sentences culled at random from the pages of the exhibits in the Meerut case in order to show that the members of the Communist Party of India are under no delusion as to the nature of the movement which they strive to promote. Thus, Spiatt said in a speech which he delivered at a young men's conference in Malda in Bengal. We need not be careful to disguise the brutal, blood thirsty side of our proposal. We say these things are inevitable. Dange in Bombay, put the matter in

\*At page 40 of the programme of the Communist International

a nutshell—"Communism is this, if, the State is based on violence it cannot be overthrown but by violence " In the north, P C Joshi wrote "Any serious and uncompromising movement for liberation ought to provide and prepare for these successive stages—mass demonstrations and non-violent disciplined direct mass action and, finally, armed mass rising " So, too Sohan Singh Josh, wrote in the *Lahore Kirti* "Yes, if preparations are made, the programme of violence can then be laid before the country " And V N Chattopadhyaya in a letter from Moscow to Jawaharlal Nehru said "But I hope that this time there will be no sentimental nonsense about the shedding of a few litres of blood, and that the revolutionary movement will be led on purely materialistic lines by trained Marxian revolutionaries ' These are a few of the numberless references to this subject to be found in the documents exhibited at Meerut and the accused testified one after another in their individual statements to the Court to the fact that they still adhered to this view It is unnecessary to quote extracts therefrom, for R S Nimbkar submitted to the Court an additional statement on behalf of himself and seventeen others which conclusively disposed of the matter in the following words 'The immediate objective towards which the party of the proletariat has to work is the general strike of workers supported by a general no tax and no rent campaign, which will as it develops lead to an armed revolution Any proposal to achieve the revolution or maintain its gains without the use of force is in our view an absurdity '

### **Violence an Immediate Objective**

This passage also disposes of one line of defence which Counsel for some of the prisoners felt it their duty to make On this subject the High Court judgement reads "The contention of the learned advocate for the appellants that such an objective is a distant aim to be realised in the unknown far-off future cannot be accepted for a moment No doubt the Communists would, as a tactical measure, begin with the preliminary stages in the first instance, but whenever conditions became favourable they would adapt themselves to those conditions and resort to armed revolution, if necessary The question is entirely one of opportunity and the opportunity has to be seized and not lost sight of as soon as it occurs

It is mainly to the readers of this book that India must look for salvation from the opportunity

# **Secret Preparations of British Government in India to frame up the Indian Communists in Meerut Conspiracy Case\***

HOME/POLITICAL/1929  
F. 10/IV

## **Subject : Meerut Communist Conspiracy Trial**

I attach Mr Horton's opinion as to the feasibility of launching a conspiracy case on the basis of material submitted to him for examination. As it is Mr. Horton's opinion that must guide the Government of India, I do not propose to comment on it, beyond saying that I know that it has been cautiously and deliberately formed and that it rests on a great deal of solid material which I myself have read and examined. I can say, therefore, that if this was an ordinary criminal case in which the sanction of the Government was not required, both Horton and myself would be prepared to put it forthwith into Court with every hope of securing a conviction.

In my opinion immediate steps should be taken to ascertain whether legal opinion endorses the result of Mr Horton's examination.

Home Department  
Hon'ble Mr. Haig

Sd/ D. Petrie,  
15.1.29

**VERY SECRET**

Hon'ble Member will remember that it was decided to consult Mr. Langford James about the proposed conspiracy case against Communists. Mr. Langford James recently came to Delhi for a few days, and as a result of the examination he was able to make, he is practically convinced that there

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\*Excerpts from "COMMUNISM IN INDIA", Unpublished Documents 1925-1934  
Edited by Subodh Roy

will be a very good case. We are clearly justified in preceeding now on the assumption that will be so.

2. We could not however, take the chance of submitting the case to a jury. However good the case, there could be no assurance that a jury would convict, and we cannot put the case into Court unless we are convinced that it will result in conviction.

3. The two principal centres of activities of the conspiracy have been Bombay and Calcutta. In both these places the case would be tried by the High Court with a jury, and neither Mr. Langford James nor the Home Department are prepared to recommend this.

4. It is proposed therefore, that the case should be tried at Meerut. It is considered that there are good reasons, quite apart from the point about a jury, for such a decision:

(i) With the present dangerous atmosphere prevailing among the labouring population both in Bombay and Calcutta is clearly undesirable to have the trial at either of these places.

(ii) There is a branch of the Workers' and Peasants' Party at Meerut. The place has been visited by Spratt and other important members of the conspiracies, and though it is not at the moment a particularly active centre of the conspiracy, it is clear that acts in furtherance of the conspiracy have been performed there.

(iii) It is a convenient central place for a trial, which will include accused and witnesses from all parts of India (Bombay, Bengal, Punjab and U.P.). It is also very conveniently situated for the Government of India, who are really primarily responsible for the trial.

5. It is probable that objections will be raised on behalf of Spratt and Bradley that having the trial at Meerut we are depriving them of the privilege of being tried by a jury which they would enjoy at Calcutta and Bombay. It is thought, however, that there would be quite convincing answers to such a claim:

(i) The system of legal procedure in the U.P. is typical of the procedure of the greater part of India. The principle of trying European British subjects with the aid of assessors is clearly recognised in the Cr. P.C., while only in a few places in India are conspiracies against the State triable by a jury.

(ii) As a matter of fact in a complicated conspiracy case against an innocent person is likely to have a fairer trial before assessors than he would before a jury.

(iii) The trial is likely to last for some months, and it would not be convenient to detain a jury for such a long time.

6. It is possible that Spratt and Bradley may claim a separate trial from that of their Indian co-accused. It is thought, however, improbable that such a claim will be made, because—

(i) Presumably the main case would proceed against the Indians, and Spratt and Bradley would have to remain in custody for many months while the main case was being tried.

(ii) The Europeans could only claim a separate trial with a view to securing that both the assessor should be Europeans: but in practice this the last thing they want.

7. What is essential is that, if it is decided to institute the case, Government should remain quite firm about its being tried at Meerut, and should not under any circumstances agree to, its transfer to Bombay or Calcutta, with a view to a trial being held with a jury. For this purpose, it seems desirable before any final decision about instituting a case is taken the concurrence of the Secretary of State in this point, as a certain amount of agitation may be got up in England on the ground that Englishmen are being deprived of the privilege of trial by jury. The Home Department consider that there are perfectly good reasons, as explained above, for the decision to have the case tried at Meerut. But it is proposed to place the Secretary of State have in possession of all facts and considerations, and obtain his concurrence.

8. I understand from Langford James that he would probably be able to give his final opinion by the 15th of March, if we especially require an opinion as early as that, otherwise without fail by 31st March. As soon as his final opinion is obtained action could be taken immediately to arrest the accused.

9. I discussed the case today with His Excellency and he directed that these proposals should be circulated to the Hon'ble Members.

Sd/ H. G. Haig  
20.2.29

**COPY OF THE NOTE LEFT WITH THE GOVERNOR OF U.P.**

1. Case likely to be started sometime in second half of March.

2. First step is to file complaint before District Magistrate, Meerut, and get warrants from him, in pursuance of which simultaneous arrests and searches will be made. Mr. Horton will file the complaint on authority of Government of India.

3. It would be necessary that Mr. Horton should be gazetted with the powers of a DIG in U.P. Orders to this effect ought to be passed just before he files the complaint, but should not be published till after the arrests.

4. Subsequent to the arrests the preliminaries will take about a month before the case is ready to put into Court.

5. Towards the end of April—a good special Magistrate will be required. His work may take 3 to 4 months.

6. About the end of August or beginning of September Sessions trial would begin and might last from four to six months.

7. Government of India will pay—

- (i) Mr. Horton and the investigating staff,
- (ii) Counsel's fees;
- (iii) Expenses connected with witnesses

H. G. Haig  
23.2.29

#### LEGAL OPINION ON THE CASE BY MR. LANGFORD JAMES, BAR-AT-LAW

The main question in this case is whether an agreement to put the programme of the Communist International into action for the purpose of affecting its aim is an offence under section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. Personally I have no doubt that it is an offence under the section. The Communist International openly avows its aim to be armed revolution for the purpose of over-throwing the existing bourgeois Governments, and replacing them with Soviet Republics. The Republics are to be an integral part of the International Soviet Republics whose head quarters are at Moscow. This is asserted to be a provisional stage preparatory to the abolition of State altogether whatsoever that phrase may mean. In any case the provisional stage can only be reached in India by overthrowing the rule of the King-Emperor and replacing it by a form of Government under the control and domination of Moscow. The object can clearly not be obtained in

a day and the C.I. has outlined a plan of campaign which is to be followed in the earlier stages and in preparation for the general strikes and armed rising of the proletariat which is to herald the approach of the millenium. Stated as shortly as possible the case against the present accused persons is that they being Communists pledged to forward the aims of the Communist International—and are carrying out the plan of campaign outlined by that body: in effect it is said that they are practical and active Bolsheviks steadily working for the overthrow of the King-Emperor and the setting up of the domination of Moscow. In my opinion the evidence available (e.g. intercepted correspondence, publications, speeches, activities, the source from which the money comes) amply proves that case. I also consider that the complicity of each of the accused in the conspiracy can be satisfactorily proved. The evidence against each person will of course vary. Some have been at the game longer than others. There is certain direct evidence against some which is absent in the case of others e.g. the two Europeans were obviously sent out by the Communist Party of Great Britain for this very purpose and they have been paid by that body—others of the accused have sent reports of their activities to Moscow and elsewhere or have corresponded with well-known Bolsheviks in Europe. One accused has actually visited Moscow and taken part in the proceedings of the International. But it is quite clear that here in India they have all acted in concert on the lines laid down by the International and while the evidence against some is overwhelming. I consider that there is sufficient evidence against each one. Also as far as I can judge the persons selected for Prosecution can fairly be said to be the leaders of this pernicious movement in the different parts of India in which it exists.

Sd/ Langford James  
13.3.29

ORDER IN COUNCIL AT A MEETING HELD ON THE  
14TH MARCH, 1929

Sanction is granted to the institution of a conspiracy case under section 121-A of the I.P.C. against a number of communists including Spratt and Bradley in the Court of the

District Magistrate, Meerut Action should be taken forthwith If arrests take place before the Public Safety Bill is introduced a communique should be issued on the day of the arrests, the draft of this being circulated beforehand to Hon'ble Members on the 18th instant

Irwin  
14 3 29

HOME DEPARTMENT  
Pol Branch  
Draft D O Letter  
No D 347, Poll Dated 29th April, 1929

CONFIDENTIAL

To  
J W A-Langford James, M A (Oxon)  
Barrister-at-law  
Meerut, U P

My dear Langford James,

We are rather uneasy at the suggestion made in two recent letters from Horton that so much material has been recovered in the searches that it may be atleast another two months before you are ready to open the case Petrie is writing to Horton and putting the considerations which appeal to us I should be glad if you would see his letter We do not of course want to press you to do anything that would damage or weaken the case But we are very definitely of opinion that earlier the case can be started without prejudice to the result the better it is from our point of view, and while it might no doubt be possible to elaborate considerably by taking another two or three months so as to fit every bit of evidence discovered at the searches into its appropriate place From the practical point of view we are disposed to think that this elaboration might be purchased too dearly We want the case of course to be thoroughly convincing but we do not want to paint the lilly I am sure you are alive to all these considerations, and



I shall be grateful if you could let us have some idea of the approximate date on which, weighing one thing against another, you think it would be advisable to open the case

2 Of the considerations mentioned in Petrie's letters, which lead us to want an early decision, I think the most important are—

(a) A judicial pronouncement is required as early as possible, which will enable us to deal with further manifestations of Communism and to prevent the Communist movement recovering from the blow which the arrest of the leaders has dealt it. We hope to be able on the result of this case to make further Communist activities both difficult and dangerous for those who wish to indulge in them. But the kind of action we have in contemplation cannot be taken until we have the clear pronouncement of a Court that these activities are illegal.

(b) From the political point of view it would be an advantage to be able to convince in general as early as possible that Communism is not the kind of movement that should receive the sympathy of Nationalists. The opposition to the Public Safety Bill has created artificial and false atmosphere, and we want to set that right as soon as possible.

3 There are two other points which are not mentioned by Petrie—

(a) Some attempts have been made to work up a movement for transfer of the case from Meerut. Government naturally would not agree to a transfer, but it seems to me that the sooner we can get the trial started the less chance there is of the movement developing seriously.

(b) Our future plans for re-introducing the Public Safety Bill have not yet been considered, but it may be of importance to get the trial out of the way before we bring the Bill again before the Assembly. This also suggests the desirability of getting a decision as early as possible.

I should be grateful if you would let me know how the whole thing strikes you from your end.

Yours sincerely  
Sd/ H G Haig,  
*Secretary*

CONFIDENTIAL

Meerut  
U.P.  
2.5.29

My dear Haig,

I can assure you that I am anxious to start the case at the earliest possible moment. The present difficulty is that we do not know what we have got and cannot until the stuff has been looked through. When that has been done our object will be not to elaborate but to simplify. What we have seen so far enables us to scrap a very great deal of the evidence upon which we launched the case. You may say that the earlier the case can be started the better from your point of view, you later speak of an earlier decision. I am not at all sure that an earlier start means an earlier decision, but I most certainly do feel that in this case we must at any rate know what stuff we have got before we start. Unfortunately only a limited number of people can do the really important work and you cannot drive them too hard. Horton, Tasadduk and Khairat Nabi are all showing signs of strain and I do not wonder. The weather is pretty trying, and they have had their noses down on this grind stone fairly consistently. We do our best when occasion offers (an application for bail) to inform the public that this is a Moscow case and nothing to do with Nationalism.

Well now for my conclusions—I think that the earliest date on which we shall be able to start in June 1st, but I should not be surprised if it was later.

Yours sincerely  
Sd/ John Langford James

Hon'ble Mr. H. G. Haig, C.I.E., I.C.S.  
Secretary to Government of India  
Home Department, Simla

#### HAIG'S NOTE ON LANGFORD JAMES'S REPLY

My letter to Mr. Langford James and his reply are for information. It is quite true as Mr. Langford James points out,

that I referred to the importance of both an early start and an early decision. An early decision is perhaps the more important, but we cannot ignore the importance of an early start. At the same time one cannot dispute the soundness of Mr Langford James's remarks, and I think it is clear that it is no use our pursuing the matter with him any further. He must be allowed to run the case in his own way. We may telegraph to the Secretary of State, and explain the position. His Excellency should see

Haig  
4 5 29

HOME DEPARTMENT

Draft D O Letter

No D 1872/29      25th May, 1929

CONFIDENTIAL

J Langford James Esqr, M A (Oxon)  
Barrister-at-law  
Charleville Hotel  
Mussorie

My dear Langford James,

Many thanks for your letter of 22nd May. Mr Nauman seems to have treated you very casually. I am now glad to hear that you are feeling so much better, and I hope you will soon have got rid of trouble.

2 I did not answer your letter of 22nd May about the date of starting the case, and it seemed to me we understand each other sufficiently. You pointed out that in my letter of 29th April I had referred both to an early start and an early decision. This was deliberate. We do attach considerable importance to an early start, quite apart from the considerations that make us want an early decision. But you know our views and I need not elaborate. The Secretary of State is always to be kept fully informed of the progress of the case. We telegraphed to him, on the 7th May, after receiving your letter, that the earliest date on which the case

might be opened is the 1st June. I should be glad if you could let know what your present anticipations are, so that we can send the Secretary of State a further telegram.

3. We had a letter recently from Horton saying that you were of opinion that there was a strong case for including Hutchinson in the trial. We are very reluctant to agree to anything which would mean further delay in opening the case, but I imagine the inclusion of Hutchinson would not necessarily mean that. Apart from this consideration we should, I think, on general grounds prefer not to add to the number of accused, and there might be some advantage in dealing with Hutchinson under the public Safety Ordinance. At the same time, we are quite open to argument if you attach serious importance to include him. Petrie has, I think, written to Horton and asked him to expedite the submission of the detailed case against Hutchinson, which we would naturally have to examine. When we have got it, it might be a good thing if you or Horton could come here and discuss. I personally am off to Bombay and Poona for a week, leaving on the 2nd June, and expect to be back on the 10th.

Yours sincerely  
Sd/ H. G. Haig

### **Letter from Langford James to Haig**

My dear Haig,

Please forgive me for not replying to your letter. I waited to do so until I got back here (yesterday). I would have replied last night but the question arose whether we should start on June 12th or try for an earlier date. After a full discussion we have decided to ask for a remand until June 12th and definitely to begin the case on that date. I am afraid that my inforced trip to Mussorie has contributed to the delay. Anyhow we shall try to under weigh before the middle of June. I can assure you that if any other accused are included this would not delay the start.

Yours sincerely  
Sd/ Langford James

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING RELATING  
TO THE MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE

Dated 6th June, 1929

Present:

H. M. (Home Department)

D.I.B.

Mr. Horton, D I.G.

Mr Emerson O.S.D.

Mr. Horton represented the views of Mr. Langford James and himself that the following persons should be included among the accused in the Meerut case

- 1 Mr Hutchinson
2. Amir Haidar—now working in Bombay
- 3 Abdul Halim Bengal
4. Hemanta Kumar Sircar „
5. Pendse Bombay
- 6 Kullkarni „

In regard to all these six Mr Horton stated that it was the considered opinion of himself and Mr Langford James that a conviction was certain and that their inclusion would not prolong the case. He explained that the reason for the delay in putting forward the proposals was that it was only after the examination of the material obtained in the searches attending the arrest of the present accused that clear cases were established and that in regard to some of them their importance was realised. The case of each prisoner was considered separately.

## 2. Hutchinson

The Prosecution is in a position to prove various communist activities of this man, and his inclusion will be of material benefit to the case, especially in proving the connections between the Communist Party and Youth Movement in Bombay. Hutchinson has taken a prominent part in bringing these together and in

particular he is primarily responsible for the organisation of "Circle Studies" which are part of the programme of the Comintern

Messrs Langford James and Horton attach importance to his inclusion in the interests of the case quite apart from other considerations. Other considerations are

It will be necessary to deal with Hutchinson sooner or later and the Home Department in consultation with the Legislative Department has already under consideration the question of dealing with him under the Safety Ordinance. There are several objections to the later course —

- (i) Hutchinson was in India when the present accused were arrested and was associated with several of them. If he is proceeded against under the Ordinance and not under the ordinary law, the obvious criticism will be that there is no case against him,
- (ii) Proceedings under the Ordinance will be represented as prejudicial to the Meerut accused. The case against Hutchinson is not separable from the general case and before the Bench of the Session Judge Government would have to state a case which included material charges sub-judice at Meerut. The general substance of this would be communicated to the accused and his counsel, and would become public. Even if it were possible for Government to frame charges against Hutchinson which were not relevant to the Meerut Case, it would only be possible to prevent Hutchinson from introducing relevant matters by forbidding him to call any witnesses. Such an order would almost certainly lead to a loud outcry and would have repercussions in the Meerut Case. There appears to the Home Department to be no means of proceeding against him under the Ordinance in the near future which, whatever the result might be, could not be open to reasonable complaint that the Meerut Case was prejudged. The Home Department therefore considers that proceedings under the Ordinance is not practicable at present.

The conclusion was that in the interests of the Meerut Case and on general grounds, Hutchinson should be included and prosecuted under the ordinary law. The Secretary of State was informed on 22nd May that this course was under consideration.

### **3. Amir Haidar**

The examination of the post-search material shows that this man has taken a prominent and important part in the Communist activities, although his part has been largely that of a secret agent working underground. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party and there is direct evidence that neither he nor his European correspondents were under any misapprehension as to the illegal nature of their proceedings. Correspondence seized at his home shows communications between the Indian Communists and Moscow. He was in fact, the chief agent of communication via Hamburg between the Indian Communist Party and Moscow.

His inclusion will permit of direct proof of this and will materially strengthen the case. His arrest will disorganise means of communication and the evidence produced against him will be of great propaganda value as showing the secret and under-hand nature of the conspiracy. The conclusion was that it was very desirable to include him.

### **4. Abdul Halim**

Abdul Halim is a member of the Executive Committee of Indian Communist Party and is an active Bengal worker.

### **5. Pendse**

Succeeded Joglekar (one of the Meerut accused) as secretary of the G I P Railway Union, has taken a prominent part in the Bombay Workers' and Peasants Party was a leading agitator during the Bombay strikes during which he made violent speeches.

Towards the end of February last the Bombay Government favoured his inclusion but there was then insufficient evidence against him.

## **6. Hemanta**

Is a prominent member of the Executive Committee of (a) the Indian Communist party and (b) of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal

## **7. Kulkarni**

Is an assistant Station master at Manmad on the G I P Railway He is a member of the Communist Party and a member of the Executive Committee of Workers' and Peasants' Party Bombay Was in regular correspondence with several important communist leaders included in the Meerut trial, is a man of brain and intelligence

8 The case of the last four was considered together Mr Horton represented that while their inclusion would be of some assistance to the case, he and Mr Langford James urged their inclusion on different grounds, namely that out of a host of big and small fry they had definitely these four men as persons who are still carrying on active communist work and were potentially dangerous as foci of serious communist activity They considered that if the Government of India desired to give a smashing blow to the movement these men should be proceeded against

On the other hand, it was considered that without their inclusion the main objects of the Government of India would be served i.e (i) the elimination of the most prominent leaders, (ii) the exposure of communist aims (iii) a judicial pronouncement which would provide a legal basis for acting under the ordinary law against communists as such

With regard to Pendse and Kulkarni it was considered that action against them would be regarded as vindictive and aimed against the Railway Union, that it could not be taken without prior consultation with the Bombay Government, which would probably wish to consult the Railway authorities and in any case the delicate situation at Bombay made it undesirable to take action which might provide trouble

While therefore it was considered that the views of Messrs Horton and Langford James deserved careful consideration the conclusion of the Home Department (with which DIB concurred) was that these four men should not be included



9 With regard to the urgency of action it was noted that the trial at Meerut would begin on June 12th March Langford Jame's opening speech will occupy 12th and 13th and the Court will adjourn on account of the Muharram holidays until 21st Evidence will therefore not be tendered before that date and it is not legally necessary that the accused should be produced before then It is, however, desirable that they should appear on the 12th and very desirable that warrants should be issued before then If therefore the Government of India decide to include Hutchinson and Amir Haidai, a very early decision is necessary

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT  
MAGISTRATE OF MEERUT

Case No 1 of 1929 (section 121 A I P C )

King-Emperor

Vs

Philip Spratt and others

Written statement of Chowdhury Dharambir Singh an accused in the above case

I Dharambir Singh state as follows -

I am not a Communist and never have been one I have heard the description of communism put forward in this case and I have now looked at some of the books and I can say quite frankly that I do not agree with the object or the methods of the Communists I am an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi and believe firmly in non-violence, and in practice I am a nationalist and propose to remain such If I had the slightest idea that by attending the conference and writing to Dr Mukherji am helping the Workers and Peasants' Party which is a communist organisation, I would never have anything to do with those two things As a matter of fact I had no idea of Workers' and Peasants Party at all I have always tried to do work among the farmers and labourers, but certainly not on communist lines, as I now understand them nor have I the slightest idea to do such work in the future on those lines

Sd/ Dharambir Singh  
26th November, 1929

Supplementary written statement of Chowdhury Dharambir Singh

I Dharambir Singh state that I made a mistake through oversight in the written statement filed by me—that I stated Workers and Peasants Party is a communist organisation. I wanted to put "Workers and Peasants Party which is alleged to be a Communist organisation. I pray that this correction should be made.

Sd/ Dharambir Singh

## APPENDIX TO NOTES

### Opinion

My inquiries and my examination of material submitted to me have satisfied me that legal proof will be available to establish the existence of a Communist conspiracy to deprive the King of his sovereignty of British India. The story of this conspiracy may be set out in outline as follows.

The existing State in Russia came into being as a result of a revolution in the year 1917. In 1919 the Communist Party of Russia headed by Lenin established at Moscow an organisation known as the Third International. The aim of this organisation was defined as the creation of world revolution for the purpose of establishing an International Soviet Republic. Since 1920 four World Congresses of the Communist International have been held in Moscow and have reaffirmed this aim. Every decision of these World Congresses is binding upon all branches of the Communist Party wherever they exist and upon all affiliated bodies. The Communist International has also laid down that when the World Congress is not in session the governing power of the whole organisation rests in a body called the Executive Committee of the Communist International. In these Congresses and in the resolutions of the Executive Committee it has been announced in the clearest terms that it is the intention of the Communist International to create a revolution in India.

2. In the Congress of 1922 M. N. Roy was present at Moscow as a delegate from India. In 1923 he was elected to the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and

until his activities were brought to a temporary halt by the Bolshevik Conspiracy Case of 1924, he was primarily responsible to the Communist International for fomenting a revolution in India. In this case 4 persons were convicted of conspiring together, under the direction of Roy, for the purpose of depriving His Majesty the King Emperor of his sovereignty of British India. It was held by a High Court of Allahabad that the evidence established that M N Roy professed himself to be an agent of the Third Communist International and to be acting on behalf of that body in organising and fomenting the conspiracy.

3 Subsequently the Communist International decided to extend its activities in India through the medium of the Communist Party of Great Britain. It did not, however, dispense with the services of Roy who was in fact specifically re-appointed to conduct Communist propaganda in India and who worked in close alliance with the CPGB. In addition much propaganda has been conducted through various affiliated bodies as well as direct from Moscow.

4 In 1925 12 members of the CPGB were convicted in England for endeavouring to seduce the armed forces of the Crown and for an offence analogous to that contemplated by section 124 A of the IPC. The importance of this lies in the fact that these accused were admittedly endeavouring to carry out in England the aims of the Communist International and that some of them in particular R Page Arnot and H F Elliott can be proved to have been concerned in endeavouring to carry out these very aims in India. Moreover, some of the documents formed at the time of arrest of these persons disclose the illegal activities of members of the CPGB with regard to India.

5 In April 1926 the CPGB sent George Allison to India. His career was shortlived owing to his having been supplied with a forged passport. Their next emissary was Philip Spratt, who reached India in December, 1926.

6 It can be directly established that Spratt also was supplied with false credentials by members of CPGB. In September 1927 he was joined by B F Bradley. Spratt succeeded in reviving the communist activity in India, which had been lying dormant since the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case. He has been assisted by almost

all those who were convicted in that case, and has succeeded in attracting to the movement large number of anti-British agitators throughout India

7 At this stage it will be appropriate to outline briefly the methods of the Communist Conspirators, a proper understanding of which is essential to a correct appreciation of the nature of the general conspiracy. These methods have been outlined in the form of a 'programme' the draft of which was adopted by the Communist International at the World Congress of 1924. They embody the principles of Lenin, who came from a family of revolutionaries and who made a science of the study of the creation of a revolution in Russia. Lenin based his principles on the Communism of Marx and formulated his plans to appeal to the largest sections of the community viz the "proletariat". His selection of this class is undoubtedly influenced by the fact that it is also the most ignorant and destitute class of the population. It is, therefore, the most easily led and ostensibly at any rate, has least to lose and most to gain by a change of Government and a transfer of wealth. In the words of the Bolsheviks it has 'nothing to lose but the chains'. The only other class for which Lenin designed his appeal was that of the 'Intellectual'—revolutionary theorists dazzled by the counterfeit brilliance of their own intellectuals and devoted to the provisions of the accepted ideals of civilization. This is the class which despite the much vaunted 'dictatorship' of the proletariat, still wields much power in Russia today. To this class Lenin offered the theory that communism is historically inevitable that it represents the concluding stage of the natural social evolution of mankind.

8 The programme of the Communist International lays down that an unavoidable premise for the transition from Capitalism to communism is the revolutionary overthrow and destruction of the bourgeois State. In order to fulfill this 'historic task' the Communist Party is enjoined to bring under its influence the broad masses of the toilers in general, and such mass organisations as Trade Unions, co-operative societies etc. It is further directed to utilise all conflicts between the ruling classes

and to discredit and destroy the political influence of democrats and yellow trade unionists. The Communist Party is to conduct its propaganda by all means, legal and illegal and by appeals to 'class' interests as opposed to those of "nationality".

among the armed forces of the State. In the period of "partial demands and transition slogans", the formation of "Workers' and Peasants' Parties" with the slogan a 'Workers and Peasants Government is laid down as a most important task. The approach to the crisis is to be as follows —Given a direct revolutionary situation with the ruling class more or less disorganised and the masses in a state of revolutionary activity, the Communist Party is to lead the masses to a direct attack on the bourgeois State. This is to be achieved by the advancement of more marked slogans and the increasing intensity of mass movements. These comprise strikes combination of strikes and demonstrations combination of armed demonstrations and strikes and finally the general strike the paralysis of the State and the seizure of power in the name of the proletariat.

There is little evidence that Spratt and his associate have seriously endeavoured to tamper with the loyalty of the armed forces of the State but this apart it can clearly be proved that they have exactly followed and are following the programme and instructions of the Communist International. It can be proved also that in all these activities they have been receiving financial help from the British Communist Party and the Communist International or organisations affiliated to or under the control of these bodies. The activities and methods of the present Communist conspirators are almost identical with those that were pronounced to be criminal in the Cawnpore trial.

The actions of Spratt and his associates in pursuance of this conspiracy can be proved on the lines followed in the Cawnpore by the production of letters money orders telegrams newspapers books journals pamphlets and by their public speeches and activities. It is my considered opinion that there will be sufficient evidence to establish a strong case of conspiracy as defined in Section 121 A (clause 2) of the Indian Penal Code against the following persons:

BI NGAL

1. Muzaffar Ahmad
2. D K Goswami
3. Shibnath Banerji
4. Shamsul Huda
5. S N Tagore

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BOMBAY	6 Philip Spratt
	7 B F Bradley
	8 S A Dange
	9 S V Ghate
	10 S H Jhabvala
	11 D R Thengdi
	12 K N Ioglekar
	13 S S Mirajkar
U P	14 R S Nimbkar
	15 Shaukat Usmani
	16 Ajodhya Prasad
	17 PC Joshi
	18 Gouri Sinker
	19 L N Kadam
	20 Dr VN Mukherji
PUNJAB	21 Sohan Singh Josh
	22 M A Majid ✓

The following persons not resident in India but in my opinion amenable to the Indian Law are also among the principal conspirators —

ENGLAND	23 R Page Arnot
	24 C P Dutt
	25 S Saklatvala
	26 H Pollitt
	27 George Allison alias D Campbell
	28 N J Upadhyaya
	29 Graham Pollard

*This list is by no means final or exhaustive, and there are  
several other persons of whom it may be  
found possible to proceed*

Sd/ R K Horton

15. 12. 57

Telegram P No 257 S Dated the 19th January, 1929

From Viceroy (Home Department), Delhi

To Secretary of State for India, London

### IMPORTANT

We have recently considered carefully the replies of local Governments to our Home Department letter No 1007 dated 18th August, 1928, copy forwarded to you with Home Department letter No S 138 dated 23rd idem regarding possible action against Indian Communists. The conclusion we have definitely arrived at is that both on grounds of general policy and on practical considerations we should in the first place if convinced that there is a strong case by the effect of a comprehensive conspiracy case against the leading Indian Communists before we consider taking any further legislative powers such as are suggested in paragraph 8 of our Home Department letter referred to above. The existing organisations would be broken up and the more dangerous leaders removed by success in such a case. It would expose by means of a judicial pronouncement which would not be questioned, the real aims and methods of the Communists. Thereafter it would possibly enable us to proceed to proclaim certain communist associations such as the Workers and Peasants Parties under the Criminal Law Amendment Act as unlawful associations on the authority of the findings of the Court. In our view it would indeed deal the whole communist movement a more serious blow than any that could be expected from the taking of new special powers.

2. A police officer has been on special duty for several months collecting material for such a case, and he has now presented a report, suggesting that there is a good case against 22 leading communists, among whom Spratt and Bradley are included. The case as outlined by him, would be a continuation of the successful Cawnpore Conspiracy Case of 1924, which for a time put an end to serious communist activities in India.

It would be sought to prove that a Communist conspiracy exists to deprive the King of the sovereignty of British India. The case would start with the activities of the Communist International and the various agents and agencies through which it has worked against India, in particular in recent times the CPGB. It would further be sought to prove that this Party has sent to India as agents Allison, Spratt and Bradley and that these have combined with a number of Indians to conduct the Communist conspiracy against the sovereignty of the King.

3. Steps are now about to be taken to obtain the best possible legal opinion, on the material collected by the Special Officer, which is very voluminous, and we do not anticipate that we shall have a final legal opinion till about the middle of March. If an assurance of success is given by this opinion, we should then proceed to launch the case as early as possible probably about the beginning of April. The trial would take many months and would be costly, but in comparison with the advantages of success the time and money would be of little account. When once a case has been launched, the main activities of the Communists would, we think, be paralysed, for the number of Communist leaders in India is not large, and all those of any account would be included in the case.

4. If it is said that there is a good case against Spratt and Bradley, we should proceed against them and not make use of the powers of deportation under the Public Safety Bill, which we anticipate will become law about the end of March.

5. It is hoped that if a case is instituted, we can depend on receiving all reasonable assistance from authorities in England, (see for instance DIB's letter No. B.C.C. General Dated 24th December 1928, addressed to I.P.I.). It is not intended to indict anyone in England though reference to the activities of Communists in England will be important and inevitable.



Telegram P.No. 648, dated 21st (received 22nd) February, 1929

From : Secretary of State for India, London

To : Viceroy (Home Department), New Delhi

Action against Indian Communists.

I am in agreement with views expressed in your telegram No. 257-S of the 19th ultimo, as to the advantages that would result from a successful comprehensive conspiracy case, but I feel compelled to draw your attention to certain difficulties which appear to me of importance.

That there must be a considerable delay before the case can be brought is inevitable but this is unfortunate in view of the present activities of the Communists in Bombay.

Of course it is essential that if the case is instituted there must be no doubt of its success and you do not anticipate legal opinion on this point before the middle of next month. If this proves to be unfavourable much valuable time will have been wasted since it is obviously undesirable in the meantime to bring forward other possible measures against the Communists or their organisation.

In my opinion the chief danger lies in the presence in India of the two British organisers, Spratt and Bradley, and perhaps also Ryan and I cannot help feeling that the sooner they are removed the better. If they were dealt with under the Public Safety Bill when passed, a heavy blow would be dealt to the organisation built up by them and might well be followed up by legal proceedings against the Indian Communist leaders for sedition etc., whether comprehensively or individually as opportunities offered.

As regards the authorities in this country we can no doubt count upon a certain amount of assistance but you will realise that the present situation with general election imminent is particularly unfavourable. Particular points raised by DIB in letter to IPI of December 24th, were referred to the Home Office who definitely stated that both legal and political objections to the proposal are insuperable (copy of Home Office opinion was sent to the DIB by the mail of February 7th). I do not know to what extent documents for which it was proposed to search are essential to your case. Another minor difficulty is the probability that witnesses sent out from here will be detained for several weeks in the hot weather.

I should like you to give these points your consideration but I shall raise no objection if after doing so you are still satisfied that the course you propose is the best

(Secy P S V O , & Dept )

Telegram P No 927 S . dated the 27th February, 1929

From Viceroy (Home Department) New Delhi

To Secretary of State for India, London

### IMPORTANT

Please refer to your telegram No 648 of 21st instant Since our telegram of 19th January was despatched matter has developed considerably We propose to retain Langford James for the case and we have been in touch with him For three weeks continuously a junior has been working under his instructions and he has recently come to Delhi himself for 3 days to study the material He has no doubt that there will be a good case though he has not yet given formal opinion and details about individuals have not yet been worked out We are proceeding now with some confidence on this assumption

2 Bombay and Calcutta have been the two principal scenes of Communist activity We are definitely of opinion, however, that disturbed conditions of labour at both these places and influences acquired there by Communists make it most undesirable from point of view of preservation of public peace that of this magnitude should be tried either in Calcutta or Bombay Moreover, owing to the special procedure in force in Presidency Towns Case, if instituted in Calcutta or Bombay would be tried before a jury, and however, good the case, there could be no reasonable assurance that jury would convict Without considering or realising the consequences politicians generally agree showing some sympathy with Communists Jurors are affected by such popular sympathy If the defence took a political line the chances would be that jury would acquit In these circumstances we should not feel justified in instituting a case before jury

3 We have therefore come to conclusion that case should be tried in U P where there has perhaps been more definite activity than anywhere else outside Bombay and Calcutta Former Communist Conspiracy case also tried in U P at Cawnpore

A branch of Workers' and Peasants' Party was established there and Spratt and other prominent communists have visited it. From point of view of Government of India will be responsible for prosecution Meerut is conveniently close. It is also convenient as being a central place for accused and witnesses who will come from Bombay, Punjab, U.P. and Bengal.

4. Objections may be taken on behalf of Spratt and Bradley that as a result of not trying them in Presidency Town they loss privilege of being tried before a jury. We think, however, that reasons stated above for trying case at Meerut are convincing. Further trial by jury of case under Chapter VI of Indian Penal Code is exceptional, not normal. There is now no distinction in regard to trial by jury between Europeans and Indians. Therefore normal procedure for trying Europeans on such charge in India is that he should be tried with the aid of assessors. Only privilege Europeans can claim is that assessors should be European—see Section 284-A C.P.C. On these grounds Spratt and Bradley could under Section 285-A claim separate trial from Indians, but not trial by jury. As European assessors would be no advantage to them, we think it improbable they will make any such claim.

5. It is realised that questions may be asked in Parliament as to reasons for selecting Meerut as place of trial and why Spratt and Bradley are not being tried by jury. We consider reasons given above furnish complete answer. Recognised rule of law both in England and India is that venue in a conspiracy case may be in any place in which overt acts are done by any of the conspirators prosecution of conspiracy: In a criminal case the choice of venue is always with the prosecution as it is with the plaintiff in a civil case. We trust you will not feel difficulty about this. If you did, case would have to be dropped, and we should be deprived of what we are convinced is in the circumstances much the most effective weapon against Communism, just when it is ready to be used.

6. It might be considered that another course was open to us, namely to proceed with the trial at Meerut of the Indian Communist—in which case questions about a jury are not likely to be raised and if raised would be of little importance—and to

disrupt Spratt and Bradley under Public Safety Bill powers. Objections to this is that Spratt is the prime mover in conspiracy. It would be a clear failure of justice if he were merely removed from the country just when the less important conspirators were being put on their trial on most serious charges. It would be difficult to refute the accusation that we were discriminating in favour of Europeans.

7 As regards dates we could possibly receive final opinion from Langford James as early as 15th proximo, and will receive it not later than the end of this month. Thereafter we should be in position to act at once. The precise date for action will depend on considerations connected with securing the passage of the Public Safety Bill, on which we have not yet arrived at conclusions. Our present programme for Public Safety Bill is to take it up again about 18th proximo. Intermediate time is fully occupied by budget, and by that date we shall have given extra votes as Central Committee will be in Delhi and these may be much needed. With their assistance there is reasonable chance that Bill may be passed without resort to extra-ordinary powers.

You will see that so far as concerns Spratt and Bradley date for proceedings against them will be taken within a few days the same whether we proceed by trial or under Public Safety Bill and once they have been arrested they have no further for harm. Indeed they will presumably in custody throughout the trial. Ryan left India early in January.

8 We do not think that the inevitable postponement for one month or less of action against the Communists need be regarded as unnecessarily dangerous to peace of Bombay. Bombay has already been authorised by us (vide our telegram No 6048 dated 8th February 1929 to you) to use Regulation XXV if satisfied that arrest of Indian Communists is essential. Situation at present does not suggest that this contingency is likely to arise.

9 We should be glad to learn as early as possible that you have no objection to trial at Meerut of Spratt and Bradley.

(PS VO, & Department)

Telegram P No 891 dated 11th (received 12th March), 1929

From Secretary of State for India, London

To Viceroy (Home Department), New Delhi

Your Telegram No 927-S of 27th ultimo Conspiracy trial has been considered and I do not think it is necessary that my objection should be further pressed

(Secy PS VO & Department)

### SANCTION ORDER

Whereas

- 1 Philip Spratt, 2/1 European Asylum Lane, Calcutta
- 2 Benjamin Francis Bradley, Bombay
- 3 Ajodhya Prasad son of Ram Prasad of Mau-Ranipur, Jhansi and 2/1 European Asylum Lane, Calcutta
- 4 Shaukat Usmani son of Ghulam Bahauddin, Moholla Uston Bikaner and room No 2, 4th floor, Block No 8 Aga Khan Building, Haines Road near Jacob Circle Bombay
- 5 Putan Chandra Joshi Holland Hall, Allahabad
- 6 Gouri Shankar Anand Math Meerut
- 7 I R Kadam, Gudi Bazar Jhansi
- 8 Dr VN Mukharji son of Dr Harish Chandra Mukharji of Jafia Bazar, PS Kotwali, district Gora'hpur
- 9 Chowdhury Dharamvir Singh MLC (Vice President Workers and Peasants Party), Meerut
- 10 Dharani Goswami, son of Ramani Mohan, of Jasodal Kishoreganj Mymensingh
- 11 Shibnath Banerji son of Dwaraka Nath of Rangdic, Khulna
- 12 Gopal Basak, son of Brindaban of Nwabpur, Dacca
- 13 Muzaffar Ahmad, son of Mansur Ali Sarkar, of Musapur, PS Sandwip, Noakhali and No 2/1 European Asylum Lane, Calcutta
- 14 Shamsul Huda, 2/1 European Asylum Lane, Calcutta
- 15 Kishori Lal Ghosh, son of late Nanda Lal, 1 Kantapukur Lane, Calcutta

- 16 Gopendra Chakravarty, son of Harendra Lal of Wari, Lohaganj Dacca
- 17 Radharaman Mitra, son of Bepin Behari of village Bamanpara Buidwan
- 18 Sripad Amrit Dange Mulji Haridas Chawl, 3rd floor Nagu Sayaji's Wadi, Prabhadevi Road, Bombay
- 19 Sachidanand Vishnu Ghate, 17 Dwaraka Das Mansions Sandhurst Road Bombay
- 20 S H Jhabwalla of Khari Bandra in the Bombay suburban district
- 21 Dhondi Raj Thengdi son of Gunwant alias Arkoba Thengdi, 229 Sadashiv Peth Poona City
- 22 Keshab Nilkant Joglekar 168 Fanaswad, Bombay
- 23 Shantaram Savlaram Mirajkar 2/3 Khandke Building Lady Jamshedji Road Dadar Bombay
- 24 Raghunath Shivram Nimbkar, Contractor Building No 2 2nd floor, Charni Road, opposite Prarthana Samaj Bombay
- 25 Gangadhar Moreswar Adhikari, Bhimrao Atmatam's Wadi, Block No 3 3rd floor Thakurdwer Road Bombay
- 26 Motiram Gajanan Desai, Joriwala Building, 2nd floor Sandhurst Road near Dr Parekh's Hospital, Bombay
- 27 Arjun Atmaram Alve, Shivram Agri's Chawl first floor close to Elphinstone Mill, Bombay
- 28 Govind Ramchandra Kasse, Bombay Development Department's Chawl No 24 ground floor, near Delsile road police station, Bombay
- 29 Sohani Singh Josh son of Lal Singh Jat, of village Chetanpura, P S Ajnala, district Amritsar, living in Islamabad a suburb of Amritsar
- 30 M A Majid alias Abdul Majid, son of Mir Faiy Baksh, Kashmiri of Dhal Mahalla, inside Mochi Gate, Lahore City
- 31 Kedar Nath Sehgal son of Bhag Mal, Kucha Morasian, Paper Mandi Lahore City

have entered into a conspiracy to deprive the King of the sovereignty of British India, and have thereby committed an

offence punishable under section 121-A of I P C Now, therefore, the Governor General in Council, in pursuance of the provisions of section 196 of Cr P C , 1898, orders Mr M A Horton Officer on Special Duty under the Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department to file a complaint against the said persons in respect of the said offence in the Court of the District Magistrate Meerut

Dated this 14th Day of March, 1929

Sd/ Haig,

*Secretary to the Govt of India  
Home Department*

Telegram R No S D 533, dated (and received)

20th March, 1929

From Bombay Special, Bombay

To Home Department, New Delhi

#### CLEAR LINE

Government of Bombay consider it possible that serious trouble may arise amongst Mill hands when arrest of Communist leaders under Meerut Magistrate's warrant become known. Therefore as a precautionary measure military assistance was asked for and military pickets have been stationed in Bombay city from 6 A M this morning. Warwickshire Regiment one company Royal Artillery 50 rifles. Jats one company Hyderabad Regiment 3 platoons. Up to 10-30 A M no trouble reported.

(Secretary & Department)

Telegram R No 1147-S, dated the 20th March, 1929

From Viceroy (Home Department), New Delhi

To Secretary of State for India, London

#### IMPORTANT

Following telegram dated 20th March from Government of Bombay is repeated for your information. Begins "Government

*(See page 35 for contents)*

" ends

(P S V O & Home Department)

Telegram P & R No 1161-S dated the 21st March, 1929  
1162-S

From Viceroy (Home Department) New Delhi  
To Secretary of State for India, London

IMPORTANT

Continuation our telegram No 1134-S dated 20th March, 1929  
In reply to short notice question in Legislative Assembly today  
Home members gave names of 31 persons for whose arrest  
warrants have been issued, read out the complaint that has been  
laid before the District Magistrate, Meerut, and gave such  
information in connection with the case as Government of India  
thought could properly be given in view of the fact that case is  
sub-judice Motilal Nehru then gave notice of his intention to  
move adjournment of the House to discuss policy and action taken  
by Governor General in Council in sanctioning and taking steps  
for wholesale raids and arrests in several parts of India public  
workers belonging to labour and peasants organisations  
Government spokesman took point of order that such a motion  
was not permissible with reference to Rule 11, 12 & 23 (i) (iii)  
Indian Legislative Rules After discussions President rules that  
motion was in order and would be discussed at 4 PM Before  
discussion took place, however, Governor General, in exercise of  
his powers under Rule 24 A (3)m Indian Legislative Rules  
disallowed motion on ground that it could not be moved without  
detriment to public interest (PS VO & Deptt)

HOME DEPARTMENT  
POLITICAL BRANCH

No 35  
Dated 28 3 29

To  
His Majesty's Under Secretary of State, for India  
Sir,

With reference to the correspondence ending with Home  
Department telegram No 1161-S dated 21st March, 1929  
1162-S



I am directed to forward, for the information of the Secretary of State, a copy of the complaint in the Communist Conspiracy Case which is being instituted at Meerut.

I have etc.

Telegram R. No. 1554-S, dated the 1st March, 1929

From : Viceroy (Home Department), Simla

To : Secretary of State for India, London

Reuter London telegram dated 29th April states that in replying to questions in Commons by Thurtle asking for names of Organisations in India the membership of which illegal, Winterton said that your information was incomplete but that one of organisations mentioned in Meerut Conspiracy indictment was League Against Imperialism. The telegram probably conveys inaccurate impression of what was said, but as Thurtle's question appears to have had special reference to Communist organisations, we think it desirable to make it plain that we have taken no steps to declare any Communist organisation unlawful. Question whether activities of these organisations are illegal will be important issue in Meerut trial.

2. Reuter of same date also reports that Winterton said Milner White was conducting magisterial enquiry into Meerut Case. This is not accurate. It is intention to appoint Milner White as special Magistrate when case is ready for him to take up but no official announcement of his appointment has yet been made and miscellaneous proceedings at present, such as bail applications, are being taken before District Magistrate. We are in communication with Langford James about probable date by which it will be possible to open the case. Large amount of important material appears to have been recovered in searches, and examination of this is causing delay. We shall telegraph again of this point shortly.

(P. S. V.O., & Deptt.)

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Telegram R. No. 1621-S, dated the 7th May, 1929

From : Viceroy (Home Department), Simla

To : Secretary of State for India, London

Reference Paragraph 2 of our telegram No. 1554-S, dated 1st May, 1929, Material recovered in searches was very voluminous, and work of examination, which must be confined to a limited number of people who appreciate what it means, take considerable time. Langford James is clear that start cannot be made until this material has been fully examined, and he knows precisely what it contains. When that has been done object will not be to elaborate, but to simplify.

Already fresh evidence discovered will enable him to dispose with a good deal of evidence originally relied upon. His view is that it cannot be argued that an earlier start necessarily means an earlier discussion. Taking everything into consideration including our desire that case should be started as early as possible, he is of opinion that the earliest date on which the case might be opened is 1st June. We feel there is considerable force in views of Langford James and that we cannot interfere with what he regards as essential preliminary work.

(P.S.V.O. & Dt.)

Telegram P. No. 1692, dated (and received) 28th May, 1929

From : Secretary of State for India, London

To : Viceroy (Home Department), Simla

Sincerely trust that Langford James is now in a position to start conspiracy case according to programme on 1st proximo or very soon after. Further delay is likely to provoke severe criticism on Assembly (or) Parliament.

This refers to your telegram No. 1621-S dated the 7th instant.

(Secretary P.S.V.O., & Deptt.)

Telegram P. No. 1817-S., dated 30th May, 1929

From : Viceroy (Home Department), Simla

To : Secretary of State for India, London

Case will be opened definitely on 12th proximo. Delay partly due to illness of Langford James.

This is in reply to your telegram No. 1692 dated the 28th instant.

(P.S.V.O. & Dept.)

**WHEREAS**

**HUGH LESTER HUTCHINSON**

has entered into a conspiracy to deprive the King of the sovereignty of British India, and has thereby committed an offence punishable under section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. Now, therefore, the Governor General in Council, in pursuance of the provisions of Section 196 of the Cr. P.C. 1898, orders Mr. R. A. Horton, officer on special duty under the Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, to file a complaint against the said person in respect of the said offence in the Court of the Additional Magistrate, Meerut.

Dated, the 8th of June, 1929

Sd/ J. A. Woodhead,  
Secretary to the Govt. of India

**WHEREAS**

**AMIR HAIDAR KHAN**

native of Kahljan Eialn—Post Office Kallar, District Rawalpindi, Punjab. (rest like H.L. Hutchinson)

Telegram P. No. 1911-S dated 8th June, 1929

From . Viceroy (Home Department), Simla

To : Secretary of State for India, London

**PRIORITY**

A reference is invited to our telegram No. 1724-S, dated 22nd ultimo. As a result of the examination of the evidence against Hutchinson it is found that there is a very strong case against him, and that if he is included as an accused in the Meerut Case it will be of material benefit to the prosecution of the other accused. To proceed against him under the Public Safety Ordinance may it is thought be reasonably criticised as prejudging the Meerut trial.

Governor General in Council has therefore sanctioned prosecution of Hutchinson as an accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

Prosecution of Amir Haidar Khan who was secret agent of communications between India and Moscow has also been sanctioned. His inclusion will expose underground methods of conspirators and will be of material benefit to the prosecution.

(P.S.V. O.& Deptt.)

Telegram P. No. 1913-S dated 9th June, 1929

From : Home Department, Simla

To : Bompol, Bombay

### CLEAR THE LINE

In Meerut Conspiracy Case Governor General in Council has given formal sanction to Prosecution of Hutchinson on grounds (a) his inclusion will materially help the Prosecution case, (b) he will have to be dealt with sooner or later, (c) action under the Public Safety Ordinance may be criticised with some reason as prejudicing case of accused in Meerut Case.

The report that Hutchinson has been elected vice-President of Girmi Kamgar Union has just been seen by the Government of India and they are holding up issue of warrant until they hear views of Bombay Government as to whether arrest would have reaction on Mill Strike situation and whether they have any objection. If possible it is desirable that warrant should be issued before the 12th instant.

Similar sanction has been issued against Amir Haidar Khan, a Punjabi, who has been active in Bombay as secret agent of the communists. Please say whether the Bombay Government have any objection in his case. Clear the line reply should be sent.

(Home Department)

Telegram P. No. 2000-S, dated 19th June, 1929

From : Home Department, Simla

To : UPAO, Nainital

### CLEAR THE LINE

Enquiry has been made by Secretary of State about long

adjournment in Meerut trial which he thinks may give rise to comment in Parliament, Government of India understand cause was insufficiency of police during Muharram to escort prisoners to and from Court and guard them there With a view to possible statement in Parliament, however they would be glad to be informed fully of cause (Dept )

Telegram P No 2027-S dated the 22nd June, 1929

From Home Department, Simla

To UPAO, Nainital

### EXPRESS

Adjournment in Meerut trial Please expedite reply to Home Department Telegram No 2000-S dated 19th instant

(Home Department)

Telegram P No 215 dated (and received) 23rd June, 1929

From UPAO, Nainital

To Home Department Simla

### CLEAR LINE

Usual Muharram holidays were from 15th to 19th instant and Magistrate has therefore been asked as to reason for adjournment extended beyond these dates Following is his reply as explained in Court Adjournment necessitated by inability of police to withdraw Muharram guard from district and provide escort before Sunday 23rd instant without endangering public security Ends

Magistrate acted on his own discretion but Government understand that in doing so he also took into account fact that Mr Langford James was not well and would probably had not been able to proceed with case if adjournment had been limited to actual criminal Court holidays, 15th to 19th instant As for police escort, if District Magistrate or Milner White had asked Governor in Council for assistance special arrangements would have been made limiting adjournment to ordinary Muharram holidays

This is in reply to your telegram No 2000-S of the 19th instant

(Secy & Deptt )

Telegram P. No. 2040-S dated the 24th June, 1929

From : Home Department, Simla

To : UPAO, Nainital

There appears to have been some misunderstanding between Magistrate and Langford James. We were informed by latter that prosecution did not desire any special adjournment, and we did not understand that his health was any factor in case. Government of India would be glad if Governor in Council would impress on Magistrate special importance attached by them to proceeding continuously with the case and reducing adjournments to as few as possible.

This is in reference to your telegram No. 215 of 13th instant.

(Home Department)

Telegram P. No. 2039-S dated the 24th June, 1929

From : Viceroy (Home Department), Simla

To : Secretary of State for India, London

### IMPORTANT

After hearing on 13th Magistrate adjourned the Meerut case till 24th. U.P. Government were asked the reason for this long adjournment. They report that from 15th to 19th only were the ordinary Muharram holidays. Magistrate granted longer adjournment on account of difficulty of finding police required to escort and guard prisoners. Local authorities required all available police during Muharram period to guard against possible communal disturbances. Had the Magistrate represented this difficulty to Governor in Council, special arrangements would have been made limiting the adjournment to the ordinary Muharram holidays. U.P. Government have been asked to impress on Magistrate special importance of proceeding continuously with case and reducing adjournments to as few as possible.

(P. S.V. O.& Deptt.)

Telegram P. No. 2070-S, dated the 27th June, 1929

From : Viceroy (Home Department), Simla

To : Secretary of State for India, London

**IMPORTANT**

Meerut Case: Defence informed Court on 25th June of their intention to move High Court for transfer of case to Allahabad chiefly on ground that they would have better facilities at Allahabad for obtaining legal assistance and legal books. Adjournment in these circumstances is obligatory under section 526 (8), Cr. P.C. and case was adjourned till 9th proximo.

This is in continuation of our telegram No. 2039-S dated the 24th June, 1929.

(P. S. V. O. & Deptt.)

Home/Political/1929

K W. 10 F. 10/IV

*Subject:* Private and personal correspondence  
between His Excellency the Viceroy  
and the Secretary of State.

Intelligence Bureau

Home Department

Government of India

No. B.C.C. Genl.

New Delhi, the 24th Dec. 1928

My dear I.P.I.

In connection with the Communist Conspiracy Case the institution of which is under consideration here, it is becoming more and more apparent that it may be necessary to have certain searches made in England of various houses and offices in which we have reason to think that there is to be found valuable documentary evidence bearing the details of the conspiracy. We should not propose any general search for the purpose of establishing the main outlines of the Communist organisation, but

should merely aim at securing certain pieces of evidence, the existence of which is indicated by other evidence already in our possession. If and when a case is instituted, we would move the trying court to issue warrants under section 24 read with section 33 of the Fugitive Offenders Act 1881 (44 & 45 Vict Chapter 69) for the search of the various premises.

Will you please ascertain if the Home Authorities are likely to raise any objection to executing these warrants? We should also like to know if they should be prepared to conduct such searches on the receipt of telegraphic intimation from the proper authority that such warrants had been issued. I should be very glad if you could send me a definite reply in time to reach me here not later than the 14th of February. It would be very useful if you could previously send me by cable some indication of the nature of your reply.

I P I  
London,

Yours sincerely,  
D Petrie

"P" Telegram

STRICTLY SECRET

To  
Secretary of State, London

From.  
Viceroy (Home Department)  
New Delhi

Dated, New Delhi, the 22nd March, 1929

No. B.C.C. Genl. Evidence in our possession shows that the Communist agitation and activity in India have been financed and controlled through the medium of the C.P.G.B. since September 1925. The C.P.G.B. have also been responsible for despatch of agents and agitators to India since that date. In this connection attention is also invited Roy's letter to C.P. Dutt dated 15th and 16th September sent with your letter No. 128 dated 5th February 1929. It is, therefore, desired by us to obtain, if possible, further



evidence which clearly establishes this fact as also reports and letters which are known to have been sent to various addresses in England, from Communist agents and conspirators in India. Individuals in England who appear to be primarily concerned are as follows: C. P. Dutt, R. Page Arnot, Harry Politt, Potter Wilson, Saklatwala, H. Rathbone and A. Pearce. Most likely place for search, therefore, appear to be the offices and addresses of three individuals and their immediate associates. It is earnestly hoped that opportunity which has been presented by the issue of the Manifesto will not be allowed to let slip as otherwise apparent objection to action which has been proposed by me might rob us of valuable evidence which we know should be in existence. It would be a matter of great help to us in India if searches are made immediately before or after 20th March, 1929.

The above is with reference to your telegram No. 748 dated the 28th February, 1929.

The above is from Petrie to I.P.I.

Copy forwarded to the Secretary, Home Department, for information.

Sd/- Illegible  
4.3.29

Secretary Home Department,  
(Hon'ble Mr. Haig)

DIB U/O No B.C.C Genl. dated 5th March, 1929

D O. No. 1496 G.M

Viceregal Lodge.  
Delhi  
23rd February, 1929

Dear Haig,

I am to send you a copy of a private and personal telegram 649 of 21st February from the Secretary of State and to say that His Excellency would like to discuss it with you or the Hon'ble Member at an early date.

Yours sincerely,  
Sd/- G. Cuningham

The Hon'ble  
Mr. H. G. Haig, C.I.E.

Telegram X

From: Secretary of State  
To : Viceroy

Dated, London, the 21st February, 1929

Received: the 22nd February, 1929

649. Private and Personal: Please see my official telegram of today to Home Department 648. Communist Prosecution. Deep misgivings with which I regard Government of India's peoples are confirmed by a recent event in Bombay and by Syke's private letter of January 26th to you of which he has sent me a copy—see especially paragraph No. 15. In the circumstances described by him it seems to me impossible to leave Spratt and Bradley at large while legal authorities pursue their lengthy deliberations to a doubtful conclusion. Moreover, I do not see what disadvantage can arise from applying Public Safety Act to them and getting rid of them and then proceeding with the prosecution of Indians. Indeed it seems to me the only safe thing to do. I beg you to consider this matter further to give Public Safety Bill priority over all other business and to rid yourself of Spratt and Bradley before Bombay again become a mass of shambles. But, of course, I appreciate that responsibility for decision lies with you.

Telegram X

From : Secretary of State  
To : Viceroy

Dated London, the 7th March, 1929

Received: the 8th March, 1929

**IMPORTANT 839, Private and Personal**

Communist prosecution: I have now before me your official telegram of February 27th 1929 and, it removes my misgivings. I should like to be assured that you have yourself considered question in the lights of my private and personal telegram dated February 21st and to put before you further grounds for anxiety,

which your official telegram suggests, I realise, of course, that trial by jury is impossible but I am seriously concerned at proposal of feeling which will almost certainly be created here if it appears or can be represented that a place with which neither Spratt nor Bradley has been connected, has been selected for trial solely for the purpose of depriving the two Englishmen of so cherished a right. It will be said that no English visitor to India will be safe; attention will be called to loss of rights which European British subjects suffered in 1923 by amendment of Code of Criminal Procedure and which has hitherto escaped much notice here, and it may be that there will also be revival of agitation in general extension of trial by jury. I foresee awkward questions in Parliament and possibility of agitation which is undesirable on the eve of the general elections. Nevertheless if a number of Indian accused are United Provinces men and some at least of their activities have been carried on in United Provinces and if you can send me material which I can use in Parliament to show that there is a clear cut prima facie case I should be prepared to take risks. I should, of course, not hesitate to do so if you are advised on legal grounds that it is important to include Spratt and Bradley in trial in order to secure convictions of Indians. It may be that this is so but it has not hitherto been suggested and mere fear of appearing to discriminate in favour of Europeans does not seem to me by itself to outweigh the advantage to get these men out of India as soon as possible and after all no one is likely to suspect Government tenderness towards Communists because they are Europeans.

I presume you are satisfied that you can get suitable European as committing Magistrate and Sessions Judge.

Telegram "P"

From : Viceroy

To : Secretary of State

Dated the 10th March 1929

IMMEDIATE

*Private & Personal.* No. 178-S Communist Prosecution.  
Reference to your private and personal telegram of 7th March,

No. 839, I have very carefully considered question in the light of your private and personal telegram of the 21st ultimo and the considerations you mention in your present telegram, but I remain strongly of opinion that the course we propose is right.

2. As regards place selected for trial, Meerut was visited by Spratt in company with important Indian Communists. They held a public meeting and founded the Workers' and Peasants' Party of U.P. on basis of C.I. programme. There are 4 centres of the Workers' and Peasants' Party in the U.P., and party is actively functioning. Spratt has himself written saying he would like to make Meerut his headquarters. Bradley has also paid visit to Cawnpore, where he associated with some of those who were convicted in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case of 1924. The legal position is we are advised, unassailable, and, as we have mentioned before the case may be regarded as a sequel to the Cawnpore Case, most of the leading accused in which will figure prominently in the coming trial.

3. In regard to criticism that Spratt and Bradley are being deprived of cherished right of trial by jury, it must be remembered that offence charged against them is not personal and individual one, but is membership of a wide-spread plot in India and outside, and place of trial cannot reasonably be made to depend on which might suit two out of a large number of accused. Moreover, you will recollect that Spratt, when on trial in Bombay in 1927 deliberately waived his right to trial, before European jurors, so that it may be argued that what Spratt wants is not special privilege of a European, but a trial before on Indian jury which he calculates would give him the maximum chance of acquittal. Paragraph 4 of our official telegram No. 927-S of 27th February describes special privileges open to Spratt and Bradley as Europeans in the U.P. Trial before European assessors was accepted in 1923 in certain circumstances as a substitute for a majority of European jury. Having regard to length and complexity of present case, it is at least arguable that European assessors are really preferable to majority European jury in interests of innocent European accused.

4 Of persons to be arrested 7 are U P men, whose activities of one time or another have been carried on there. A series of house searches will also have to be made in U P.

5 With regard to clear cut prima facies case, as you know we shall not take action unless we are satisfied of this. No public statement before arrests take place is possible, and as soon as arrests have been made in pursuance of Magistrates warrant case is subjudice and details of it cannot be discussed in Parliament.

6 As to inclusion of Spratt and Bradley I am advised that one could not go so far as to say that it is legally necessary to include them in order to secure conviction of Indians. But Spratt in particular is the central figure of the conspiracy, and if he was omitted the case would appear so obviously incomplete that it might well form the subject of judicial as well as public comment, to which there could be no answer. Further absence of Spratt and Bradley might seriously affect question of sentences, as it would be argued that Government attached so little importance to case that it was content to let the principal conspirator escape untouched. Apart from above considerations which appear to me decisive, inclusion of these two would naturally aid Crown in proving that conspiracy has been promoted by and in pursuance of designs of Communist International, which is essence of case.

7 We are satisfied that we can get suitable Europeans as committing Magistrate and Sessions Judge. Matter has already been discussed with Governor, U P.

8 I earnestly trust you will find yourself able to authorise us to proceed at once. On the programme fixed it will be necessary to take the first preliminary step, namely obtaining warrants from District Magistrate, Meerut, in morning of 15th instant, though arrest will not follow some days.

#### Telegram 'P'

From Secretary of State      Dated, London, the 11th March 1929  
To      Viceroy      Received, 12th March 1929

**IMPORTANT Private & Personal No 889**

Ref to your private and personal telegram No 178-S dated the 10th March. This alters the whole aspect of the case for prosecution and if the Government of India has sent this

information in the first instance. I should not have found so much difficulty in agreeing with them. I hope they will now go ahead with all possible vigour and that counsel will be instructed to oppose stoutly all dilatory tactics. I fear we cannot help you here in the searches. We have been in close personal touch with Home Office, but it is clear that very little if anything can be done.

Viceroy to Secretary of State                      Telegram P., 4th April, 1929.

PRIVATE & PERSONAL: No. 245-S. Communist Conspiracy Case. Please refer to your Private and Personal telegram of 11th March, No. 889. You need feel no doubt about our intention to prosecute with vigour. I had been a little disappointed to see from your telegram that you are experiencing difficulty in getting from us the assistance in the matter of evidence which we had hoped for. I am very glad, however, to inform the latest communication, which Petrie had received from I.P.I., that permission has now been given us to use certain evidence in the possession of the Home authorities, which is of first rate importance to the case, and that Home authorities will cooperate in sending, if necessary, witnesses to prove these documents. We quite realise out there the inconveniences which this cooperation in our task involves; but we are satisfied that the introduction of the evidence will greatly strengthen the case of the Crown. Perhaps you convey to the proper authorities a word of appreciation on our behalf of the attitude which they have adopted.

Home Department and perhaps H.E. should see these secret papers re: our tendering as evidence in the Meerut Case photographs of certain documents which were taken in London. The Home authorities have all along been somewhat qualified in approval of the idea of running a big conspiracy case, and they have shown themselves rather "sticky" in the matter of permitting us to use evidence obtained by or through them.

I am now very glad and relieved that, under a certain amount of pressure, they have agreed to do what is required, and both Mr. Horton and myself are satisfied that the Prosecution case will benefit enormously. It would have been better still if the Home

authorities could have seen their way to make certain searches we indicated to them, but this was not to be.

Although objections have now been withdrawn, it is obvious from A & B in the telegram at p. 11 that there is still a tendency to hang back. I think, therefore, it would be a good thing if H.E. were to send a private and personal telegram to the Secretary of State saying how much we appreciate the permission now given us to use certain evidence that we gladly avail ourselves of the permission, and that we are satisfied that the introduction of the evidence will greatly strengthen the case for the Crown. It would be a good thing, too, if the above message would be conveyed to the authorities concerned, as it would afford a certain assurance against their wavering in the resolution they have formed.

Home Department  
(Hon. Mr. Haig)

D. Petrie  
1.4.29

# MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE

## THE GENERAL STATEMENT

### OF 18 COMMUNIST ACCUSED

#### *INCLUDING*

G Adhikari, Ajudhia Prasad, G. Basak, B. F. Bradley,  
G. Chakravarty, Shamsul Huda, D. Goswami,  
S.V. Ghate, K.N. Joglekar, P.C. Joshi,  
M.A. Majid, R.R. Mitra, Muzaffar Ahmad,  
S.S. Mirajkar, Sohan Singh Josh,  
P. Spratt, Shaukat Usmani, R.S. Nimbkar.

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### **BEFORE R. L. YORKE, ESQ., I.C.S.**

*Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut, U.P., India.*

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PAGES 2609-2968

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MEERUT  
SARASWATI MACHINE PRINTING PRESS  
1932



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# Meerut Conspiracy Case

## The General Statement

Before R. L. Yorke, *Esq.*, *I.C.S.*

*In the Court of R. L. Yorke, Esq. I.C.S. Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut*

In the case of the King Emperor versus P Spratt and other  
Examination of R. S. Nimbkar accused under section 342 of the  
Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, made before me, R. L. Yorke,  
Additional Sessions Judge at Meerut on the 2nd day of December  
1931

My name is Raghunath Shivram Nimbkar, my father's name is  
Shivram Jagannath Nimbkar, I am by caste No Caste, 32 years of  
age by occupation Publicist, my home is at Bombay, Police  
Station Bombay, District Bombay, I reside at Bombay

Q You heard your statement in the Lower Court P 2614 read  
over on 16.3.31. Is that statement correct?

A Yes

Q (Accused asks me to put him the whole of his documents  
in one question )

The following documents are in evidence against you, and may  
be grouped as below

I Foreign Connections P 1828, 1795, 2403, 1348(23), 1633,  
1348(34), 2408, 1610, 1761, 1762, 2057 and 2415

II W and P P Bombay P 1355(7C) (7A) (7B), 851, 1017,  
1940 and (1), 1375, Kranti of 14.5.27 and 21.5.27, 843, 1353,  
1343, 1373(6), 1358, 1748, 837, 1248(41) (26) (33) (50), 835,  
544(1), 831, 1348(18) (15) (40) (14) (42) (6), 1344, 1748, 1792,  
1602, 1685, 1373(14), 1740 1747, 1758, 1759, 1170, 1261, 1690,

1373(18), 1745, 726 Urdu Kirti February 1929, 1375 Kranti of 28 5 27, 25 6 27, and 3 9 27, P 930 Kranti of 29 7 28, 2311 and 2050(1) to (5)

III A I W P P P 468(2), 1763, 1764 1756, 1757, 1771, 1754, 1751, 1749, 1750, 1770, 1769, 1768, 1336 1767, 1302, 1765, 1099, 1800, 474 2163, 1098, 1760 and 459 and statements of PWs 36 and 254

IV C P I P 1796, 1287(11), 782 780, 781, 1684, 1295 and 1296

V Other W P P P 1755, 1753, 1616, 2049 and 1626

VI T U s and strikes P 958, 944, 959 949 963, 967, 792 985, 662, 776, 932, 964, 2237, 2241(1) 2243(a) and (b) 1696 1706 M2, 1710 M1, 1713 1726 M2 548(5) D Spratt and statements of PWs 245 and 273

VII Connections etc P 1791 1997 995 129 146 645 773 1494 1508, 1794 statements of PWs 268 271 P 1744 1743 1774 1777, 1742, 1752, 1772, 1773 1775 1776 and 1778 to 1789 and 2055 C

The above lists probably do not include the numbers of all the relevant witnesses

Have you anything to say in explanation of the above evidence ?

A This is a case which will have political and historical significance. It is not merely a case launched in the ordinary course of its duties by the Police against 31 criminals. It is an episode in the class struggle. It is launched and conducted as part of a definite political policy. It is an attempt on the part of the Imperialist British Government of India to strike a blow at that force which it recognises as the real enemy which will ultimately bring about its overthrow, which has already taken up an attitude of irreconcilable hostility towards it and has already shown a very menacing strength—the masses of the poor and exploited population of this country. It is an attempt by the Imperialist Government to strike a blow at its enemy, not only by removing from the field the mere 31 individuals, but by reading a lesson to all who would follow the line of the mass revolutionary struggle in future, and by establishing a number of convenient legal precedents, which will facilitate the smashing of the workers and



peasants' movement by 'lawful' and 'constitutional' means. This case, in spite of the denials of the Prosecution, is an attack upon the workers' Trade Union Movement, an attack upon the peasants' movement and an attack upon the movement for the Independence of India from British Imperialism.

In this statement we shall be concerned principally with the case in this aspect i.e. in its real aspect. With the legal side of the case we shall have little to do. We are concerned with historical processes and changes in which legal systems and Penal Codes are only by-products. When we are trying to set up an entirely new system of laws we cannot be expected to pay very much respect to the existing one.

We do not plead for mercy, or even for justice before this Court. This is a class court, and in relation to an offence directed against the ruling class itself, the conception of justice has no meaning. We know that this Court will not give us justice but nevertheless we do not passively offer ourselves as a sacrifice to the cruelty of Imperialism. We challenge Imperialism that it will not dare to provoke the oppressed classes and the oppressed peoples of the whole of its empire, by wreaking its revenge upon us.

In a Communist conspiracy case it is expected of the accused that they will show whether or not they profess to be Communists. So at the outset of our statement we want to inform the Court and through it the world especially the world of Capitalism and Imperialism, and the world of the land owners and feudal lords of India that we are Communists. We repeat the words of Marx and Engels: 'Communists scorn to hide their views and aims. They openly declare that their purposes can only be achieved by the forcible overthrow of the existing social order.'

Our party, the Communist Party of India, was not at the time of our arrest duly affiliated to the Communist International, and we were not all members of any Communist Party. But nevertheless we fully subscribe to the system of thought and the well-thought-out and scientific political programme laid down for the world revolution, by that most powerful world-wide revolutionary organisation, the Communist International.

From the study of historical facts we have no doubt that India will play its part in the development of the world. We have no doubt that ultimately the proletarian revolution will take place in India, resulting in the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which organising society on the principles of Socialism, will gradually eliminate classes and prepare the way for the evolution to the stage of Communist society, wherein everybody will work according to his capacity and will share the social product according to his needs.

We are equally convinced by the same study, that in a colonial country, such as India is, the revolution which will precede the proletarian revolution, will be of the nature of the bourgeois democratic revolution. This will achieve the complete freedom of India from the control of British Imperialism, and the complete abolition of all feudal and pre-feudal forms of social organisation and will result in the establishment of an Independent Democratic Republic. This is the revolution for which we were working, and we are convinced that the programme which we put before the country, the programme of the united anti-Imperialist front of all those classes capable of carrying through the revolution, was the only correct programme for attaining it.

Our programme and the activity which we undertook in our efforts to put it into effect, have been much misunderstood and also intentionally misrepresented by the Prosecution and by the Magistrate who committed us.

We think it necessary both for the Court and for the assessors that the chief particulars in which the Prosecution have tried to lead them astray should be corrected by us. This is the main purpose of our statement.

## I. OUR SOCIAL THEORY

Our statement is made in terms of the theory of Marxism and Leninism. It is a matter of experience that this theory and the attitude of mind which it involves is very difficult of comprehension to members of the bourgeois class, and particularly so, we gather, to members of the British bourgeoisie. The Prosecution have clearly failed to understand it. They have

shown this not merely by the abuse—"grotesque", "fantastic", 'antiquated"—which they have levelled at it, but by their attempt to explain it to the Court

We can understand this difficulty, which a bourgeois journalist recently expressed by comparing Lenin with St Thomas Aquinas in regard to the difficulty of comprehending him. The parallel may seem strange, but it has at least this truth, that for the understanding of the system associated with each of these names, it is necessary to escape from many of the ordinary ideas and prejudices current in modern society. As St Thomas represents the mind of a past, feudal age, which is already superseded by the totally different bourgeois age, so Marx and Lenin represent the future proletarian Socialist age which will even more completely differ from the present. In order to comprehend Marxism and Leninism it is necessary to realise such obvious but (for the bourgeoisie) unpleasant truths as these: that Capitalism is not a permanent category but a phenomenon which had a beginning and will have an end; that everything changes, and nothing, not even the British Empire, is permanent; and that the British constitution and the Indian Penal Code are not laws of nature.

The absence of a historical outlook on the part of the Prosecution is very striking. The complaint filed against us conveys the idea that we, or the Communist International, had one day thought, without reference to past history or present conditions, that it would be a good idea to overthrow the Government of India, and had proceeded to try it. Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect much philosophical insight in a complaint. But the same conception is to be found in the minds of the Prosecution throughout the case. The Counsel for the Prosecution said in his opening Address in the Lower Court:

Their objective is by means of progressive mass demonstrations, strikes, by making everybody disgruntled, and using in certain countries the nationalist movement for the moment in evidence, to stir up a state of revolutionary ferment which will be favourable to direct action and then to bring about a General Strike as a prelude to mass armed action."

The same attitude is shown in his remark about the Russian Revolution —

"Now this Russian Revolution, as I have already indicated, was carried through by a small and resolute body of men"

The Magistrate sums up the Prosecution case in the same way, and in spite of certain misgivings (Committal Order, page 46) finally accepts completely the view of the Prosecution

Now it is perfectly clear that if this were the real state of affairs, it would not be worthwhile to prosecute us at all. We were arrested and tried because we were considered a danger to the State, that is to the British Rule in India. And we were a danger to the State not because of anything we did or could do to ourselves, but because we represented powerful historical forces, which are changing the whole world, and are incidentally making for the overthrow of present regime in India. It is a conspiracy not of 31 men, nor even of the whole of the Communist International but of objective conditions and processes, and it is these alone which determine historical events.

Marx expressed the matter in the most general form in the much quoted passage in the preface to his "Critique of Political Economy" (P 1776, "The Essentials of Marx" pages 176-177)

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness.

"At a certain stage in this development the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these turn into its fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed."

Here he states in general terms the conditions which bring about revolution. These conditions are not ideas of hatred or

violence, or even of idealism and self-sacrifice in the minds of men but a change in the material conditions upon which the life of society is based

This is not a wildly-un-orthodox view, in theory, though its consistent application to history and present events is practically confined to Communists. It is partially and more less grudgingly accepted by quite respectable bourgeois authorities, Professor H. J. Laski, for example (in P. 1782 'Communism' page 77)

Consider again the view taken in P. 2398 (Draft Programme of the Communist International, 1924) pages 8 onwards. The Draft there considers the conditions in the nature and tendencies of development of Capitalism which go to produce the proletarian and colonial revolutions under the headings — Contradictions in the development of the Capitalist system — Imperialism — the last stage of Capitalism. The results of the war and the beginning of the decay of Capitalism'

The outlook pervading the whole volume but shown perhaps most clearly in these paragraphs is a deterministic one. It speaks definitely of 'The inevitability of the collapse of the Capitalist system' and it will be noticed that for example 'Intensification of the class struggle' and 'Acuter struggles between colonies and mother countries' are regarded as determined by the objective conditions of the Period. The first of these paragraphs contains the words —

finally, the Marxian theory — the greatest weapon of the proletarian struggle, which becomes a powerful force as soon as it captures the masses

The very formulation and acceptance of this theory itself, we look upon as a matter determined by the process of development of Capitalism. Our actions therefore — and the movement in which we took part, are no arbitrary inventions of ourselves, or even of 'Moscow'. The revolutionary movement arises from the conditions the present period of the world generally and India particularly. Our actions as individuals were in accordance with the necessities of the periods as we saw them. We saw the line of the historical forces, and followed it

Many people, including recently no less intelligent a person than Mr. Bernard Shaw (in his "The Intelligent Women's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism") have raised the objection to our generally deterministic outlook, that it contains a contradiction, or is in contradiction with our activities. Their point is that if we regard the future as determined we need not make any efforts to secure that any particular future event or type of event comes about. It is a hoary controversy and we do not intend to enter into any philosophical discussion. But it is worthwhile to state our view in the matter. We think it is not different from the view taken in practice by most other kinds of determinists. For example enthusiastic patriots on both sides during the last European War regarded it as certain that they would win. And at any rate after the entry on their side of the United States of America, it will be admitted that the Entente's analysis of the situation was correct and their expectations justified. Yet they did not regard this as a reason for not trying to win the war. They realised that a necessary premise, without which their conclusion did not follow, was that they all should try as hard as possible for their object.

Our attitude is similar. We regard our ultimate victory and the establishment of Communism as in the highest degree probable (speaking in a strict scientific sense) that is to say, for practical purposes certain and inevitable. But a link in the causal chain or nexus from which our victory will follow is our own exertions.

At certain times theorists have attempted to raise the question of the relative importance of what may be called the objective and the subjective factors in social events. Lenin gave the only possible solution of the problem. He deprecated the formulation of such a question as valueless if not meaningless. He demanded the most careful possible estimate of the objective situation and lines of development and the adjustment of our actions to that estimate. He accepted the objective developments in fact as determinant. But our lines of action having been decided upon, he demanded the maximum possible effort in those directions, and consistently fought against the tendency to "leave things to work out of themselves". (This matter is referred to in P. 1213,

Bukharin, "Historical Materialism" and P 1230, Losovsky, "Lenin and the Trade Union Movement")

While therefore we assert our generally deterministic view we do not attempt to use this as an argument by which to escape from the consequences of our actions, or to minimise them in the eyes of the Court. On the contrary we lay the greatest possible stress upon the importance of conscious revolutionary activity, organisation and leadership.

### **The Indian National Revolution Inevitable**

Our attitude to Indian affairs accords with the general views here described. We shall deal with the matter a little more fully afterwards. We consider that the way in which the economic and political life of the world generally and of India in particular have developed make it certain that the Indian national revolution now developing will culminate fairly soon in the revolutionary overthrow of British Imperialist rule.

India has been under political subjection for a long time. Its economic and political evolution has been held back. Its industrialism is still backward and ill balanced and dependent to a very great extent on foreign supplies of the means of production. Its agrarian relations are still mostly in various stages of feudalism; its agricultural technique extremely primitive. Politically it has yet taken hardly any steps towards the establishment of bourgeois democracy. The country is not only held back in its development but is economically exploited for the benefit of the British bourgeoisie. In consequence of all this the position of the masses of the people is one of extreme poverty and social backwardness while even the bourgeois class as a whole seriously hampered in its development. This position cannot be remedied within the system of Imperialism and consequently the situation is objectively revolutionary, and actually, these conditions have for some time been giving rise to various kinds of movements of protest of increasing intensity.

India has been under Imperialist domination for a long time. But capitalist large scale industry, the great ferment and revolutionary agent, which, wherever it has gone, has quickly

upset the old order, has entered only recently This is the reason for the rapid revolutionising of the situation in the present period But the world outside India is also developing The system of Capitalism generally has reached in recent years a condition of acute crisis Whether or not Lenin's diagnosis is accepted, it must be admitted as the fact that at any rate since the year 1914 we have seen an uninterrupted series of wars and revolutions of absolutely unprecedented magnitude and universality, accompanied by general economic crisis and other political disturbances, extending throughout the world And one at any rate of these revolutions has succeeded in establishing a radically new social order, which is looked up to all over the world by the oppressed classes and peoples as a model for the new order for which they are striving Now this condition of universal change and unsettlement has its reactions upon India, and cannot but have the effect of hastening and intensifying the revolutionary movement which in any case is bound to develop by reason of India's internal circumstances This is a short sketch of what we mean by the objective necessity or inevitability of the Indian national revolution and why we cannot but laugh at the Prosecution's picture of a placid and contented India disturbed by the efforts of Moscow to goad it into unwilling revolution We have no objection to the help of the Communist International and the Russian working-class, in fact we consider that India should welcome such help But the Indian revolution will be due not to anything which the Communist International may do but to British Imperialistic exploitation and oppression and the poverty and misery of the masses of the people of India Dt 7 12 31

## II CAPITALISM

We now propose to develop some of the fundamental conceptions of Communist theory a little more fully The Magistrate (Committal Order pages 27 to 29) attempts to give an account of what we mean by Imperialism, but fails to make it clear But the idea is of the greatest importance in explaining our conception to the world as it stands and develops today In order to explain the matter we must go back to what the Counsel for the



Prosecution, with his accustomed piety, called our old Testament, namely Karl Marx

The learned Counsel rather airily dismisses the materialist philosophy of history and the theory of the 'accumulation of surplus value,' as things of no interest to us. In this he is wrong. These matters are of the greatest interest. We have just given very roughly and briefly an idea of the materialist conception of history. But it is not merely an abstract theoretical conception. We apply and use it as a guide in practice, as can be seen from a study of our political discussions, or of this statement.

Marx applied it, and it is on the conclusions he drew that the general lines of our policy are based. Having established that the fundamental driving force is the development of the economic basis, the mode of production, Marx next arrived at the conclusion that the way in which this force operates is through the social classes. He established the principle of the class-struggle, for which incidentally the Counsel for the Prosecution displays much more respect. He opens his Communist manifesto (P 1776 page 31) 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class-struggle.'

Applying this conception then to the history of mediaeval society, he shows how the bourgeois class rose as a result of the development of the means of production and established itself as the ruling class in the modern world by means of a fierce and prolonged struggle with the ruling class which had dominated society in the previous historical epoch, the class of the feudal lords. 'The bourgeoisie,' he says, (page 33) "historically has played a most revolutionary role."

### **The Bourgeois Revolution**

It is necessary to dwell a moment here upon a conception which appears often in our discussions, that of bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Human history is conceived, schematically and abstractly as following a certain course of development, or passing through a series of stages. The history of any given country or people will follow this course more or less roughly, passing rapidly over one

stage and lingering for a long time at another etc. The chief stages are primitive or tribal Communism, the patriarchal (or matriarchal) stage, so called ancient society, (the stage characterised by the existence of relatively large tribal stages, private property in land and the employment of slaves); feudalism, the bourgeois period, and finally Socialism.

Any society can be characterised as belonging to one or other of these main stages, though there may be within that society relics of earlier and the beginnings of later states. Similarly any type of institution, mode of production etc., can be described as characteristic of a certain stage, though it may exist to some extent in other stages. In this sense the bourgeois-democratic revolution can be understood as the process which began in England, for example in about the fifteenth century, and is going on, theoretically, till today (as it is not yet completed), whereby the control and leadership of society is taken out of the hands of the definitely feudal barons and is transferred first to the semi-bourgeois landed nobility, later shared by the merchant bourgeoisie, then taken by the industrial and then financial bourgeoisie and so on. The process may involve violent revolutions as in England in the 17th century, in France in the 18th century, and in Germany and Russia in the 20th century, when the progress of production and the bourgeois class which goes with it meet with obstacles of a social or political character arising from the older forms, which cannot be removed in any other way. But these revolutions may not complete the work of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; they may only achieve certain of the steps characteristic of it. Any of the developments in the direction of freeing the land from private ownership and especially of freeing the land workers from the servile status which they occupied under feudalism, and generally of personal freedom nominal or real, democratic Government, etc., which have been carried out during, or are compatible with the existence of capitalism as the dominating economic system, and of the bourgeoisie as ruling class, are described as bourgeois-democratic. Such are theoretical equality before the law, the general equality of the sexes, universal education, universal suffrage, republicanism, and the like.

### **The Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution and the Proletariat**

But it must be understood that what are generally called the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution are not necessarily carried out by the bourgeoisie themselves, or under their rule. In their revolutionary periods the bourgeoisie may become relatively radical and launch slogans of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and so on. But once they have obtained a satisfactory measure of power they become conservative and grant reforms in general only under pressure.

Thus can be understood the statement, which probably applies to most countries in the world, that many of the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution are left to be achieved by the proletariat when it has taken power. We may take the example of India. Here and there exist many relics of feudalism and even earlier social forms (caste etc.) which in the normal course the bourgeoisie would abolish. Similarly it is historically the task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to achieve the independence of the country from foreign control. But we consider that actually these things will not be done by the bourgeoisie at all. These and many others of the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution will actually be carried through by the working-class and peasantry when they have taken power.

### **Marx's Analysis of Capitalism**

The present period of the domination of the bourgeoisie has its characteristic class-struggle. The Communist Manifesto says (P. 1776, page 31): "The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses however this distinctive feature; it has simplified the class antagonism. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two classes directly facing each other: bourgeois and proletariat". (The phrase may be noticed: 'more and more splitting up'). The learned Counsel for the Prosecution heaps much ridicule upon Marx for his supposed arbitrary division of the world into

two classes. Marx does not do this. He states that the tendency, which no doubt will never be complete in any country, though it will be, and is in most countries already, complete enough for practical political purposes, is towards such division. There will always be plenty of border line cases with which the defenders of the bourgeoisie will be able to 'refute' the 'crude' and 'arbitrary' generalisations of Marx.

Already at the time of the Communist Manifesto Marx had sufficient insight into capitalist society and its lines of development to be able to predict in general terms that it would come to an end in the same sort of way as feudal society had done, by the growth within it of a new class which would eventually overthrow the political dominance of the capitalist class and proceed to change the economic relations of society. That class of course could be none other than the proletariat. This is the central conception of the Communist Manifesto.

Subsequently Marx devoted himself to a more detailed examination of Capitalism, and succeeded in establishing the laws according to which capitalist society develops. Basing himself on the much-despised surplus value theory he showed how the progressive accumulation of capital takes place (P. 455 "Capital" Volume I, Part 7); how capital becomes centralised and concentrated into fewer and bigger aggregations (pages 690 onwards); as the capitalist class becomes wealthier and smaller, the working-class becomes bigger (pages 675 to 677); but at the same time a permanent class of unemployed workers or "industrial reserve army", is formed (page 694 onwards), which is larger, the larger becomes the employed population (P. 712). The employed workers are subjected to increasing specialisation and division of labour (pages 450-51); women and children are introduced into industry (page 480); at first the working day tends to be prolonged (p. 428) subsequently to be shortened by legislation, but the intensity of labour progressively increases (page 435). As a result of these and many other tendencies, notably the periodic crisis arising from over-production and under

payment of the workers (pages 488 to 493 and page 739), the poverty and misery of the working-class as a whole increases progressively (pages 713-14)

The analysis of capitalism is carried further in Volumes II & III of "Capital" but even in Volume I a confirmation is found of the prediction in the Communist Manifesto of the tendency of capitalism to develop an ever acuter class-struggle, between a small number of enormously rich monopolists and the increasing multitude of the impoverished proletariat. The political developments from this are not discussed fully in Capital. Marx merely leads up to it by his economic analysis and gives a brief summing up in the famous passage which concludes (page 846)

While there is thus a progressive diminution in the number of the Capitalist Magnates (who usurp and monopolise all the advantages of this transformative process) there occurs a corresponding increase in the mass of poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration and exploitation, but at the same time there is a steady intensification of the wrath of the working-class, a class which grows ever more numerous and is disciplined, united and organised by the very mechanism of "the capitalist method of production." Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter upon the method of production which has flourished with it, and under it. The centralisation of the means of production and the socialisation of Labour reach a point they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

### **Capitalism a Barbarous System**

The matter can be summed up in the form of two different but connected theses. One is that capitalism is intrinsically a brutal and inhuman system—Marx, in his "Critique of Political Economy" called it "the closing chapter in the pre-historic stage of human society." The conclusions of Marx which have just been given in regard to its effects upon the workers are verified by the experience of all Capitalist countries. Capitalism by its very

nature produces and perpetuates poverty of a more or less intense character in the bulk of the population under its sway, and with it all the other phenomena which accompany poverty—gradual degradation of the physical, and probably of the mental standard of the population; insanitary conditions and hence widespread disease; ignorance and all sorts of vices and perversions which arise from ignorance and the lack of means to satisfy human instincts.

From the inequality and class-character which are essential features of society under Capitalism spring many evils not less serious in nature; the denial of justice to the workers; the corruption of politicians and of the educational system, the arts and the social sciences, owing to the necessity felt by the bourgeoisie of using these means to keep the working-class ideologically under its control. Through the exaltation of the bourgeois as the leader and ideal of society arises a commercial morality whose manifestations range from the supply to the public of adulterated goods, to the debasement of the cultural level of the people by such agencies as the commercial press.

We need not pursue the matter further here. It is well-known, and is largely admitted, not merely by socialist critics but even by defenders of Capitalism themselves. We can refer again to Professor Laski (P. 1782, pages 112-114).

### **Capitalism: Self-Destructive**

The second thesis is that Capitalism is ultimately a self-destructive system. In accordance with the conceptions which have already been outlined, the technique of production will go beyond the bounds of Capitalism. "Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter upon the method of production", and in consequence its replacement by another system is objectively necessary. The way roughly in which Capitalism becomes a fetter upon production is as follows:

Owing to the relation of exploitation between the worker and the capitalist, more is produced than can be consumed within the system itself. The consequence is a series of over-production crises, which involve the ruin of the weaker capitalists and the

destruction of the means of a production on a large scale. Alternately with crises there occur periods of prosperity in trade and production, in which the lost ground is recovered and extended, but only by the invasion of capital into new spheres, ultimately into backward countries etc. Thus over-production, which in the earlier period of Capitalism in spite of its disastrous effects, has also a progressive function, must ultimately tend actually to reduce the total of the means of production which are able to operate and in this way will prove a "fetter".

This anarchical mode of progress of Capitalism depends upon its individual competitive basis. To get rid of this completely it would be necessary not only to abolish exploitation, but to institute a complete centralisation of production. Centralisation is gradually forced upon Capitalism, up to a certain point—to the length of national monopolies in various branches of industry, and certain shifting and temporary international combinations. But it cannot become complete owing to the fundamental national limitations of Capitalism, and its irregular mode of growth. The competitive struggle, at first within the national limits, extends eventually beyond them, the result being wars, and hence destruction of prosperity.

Capitalism inevitably generates a class-struggle within itself which even in its earliest forms—the instinctive and sometimes violent resistance of the workers to technical innovations etc.,—is destructive of the means of production. Ultimately, this struggle becomes so acute as to affect profoundly the whole of economic life, and nation-wide and even international strikes of thousands and millions of men occur, and so on.

### **Capitalism Leads Inevitably to Socialism**

Roughly in this way Capitalism comes ultimately to be no longer a means whereby production is advanced, but a fetter upon production, and is replaced by another system. That system must obviously be Socialism, for Socialism involves the establishment of centralised production ultimately all over the world; it puts an

end to exploitation and hence to over-production, it resolves the contradiction between socialised labour and individual appropriation, and it puts an end to the class-struggle.

It is worthwhile to point out that Marx did not in any way overlook the advance which Capitalism has brought to mankind. In the *Communist Manifesto* (P 1776 pages 33-36) he pays tribute to the immense advance in the technique of production and scientific knowledge produced by Capitalism. These advances provide the indispensable technical basis, the lack of which was the fundamental obstacle in the way of all earlier utopian socialist schemes, which can now be used for the construction of a really free and equal socialist society. But not by Capitalism. Capitalism has failed, and by its nature inevitably must fail to do this. In order to take advantage of its conquests we must overthrow Capitalism. It has outlived its usefulness like the systems which went before it, and the time has now come when it in turn must be overthrown and replaced by a still higher system capable of carrying through still greater advances.

### **Through The Working-Class Revolution**

The means whereby Socialism is established arise of course from the class-struggle, which owing to these defects in the capitalist system becomes acute ultimately to the point of civil war: the overthrow of the bourgeoisie as a political ruling class and their economic expropriation by the proletariat.

It is at this point that many Socialists part company with the Communists. They will admit, in theory, all that has gone before and much more. But on the inevitability of violent revolution they disagree. The general question need not be considered here. We shall deal later with the matter as it affects India. All we need say is that the revolution has begun. Its reality can no longer be denied. All the non-revolutionary 'socialists' can do now is to seek to deny the obvious fact that the Russian Revolution is a Socialist Revolution, to minimise its importance, and generally to play more and more vigorously their part of defending Capitalism against the workers by means of the myth of 'peaceful evolution to Socialism.'



## **Imperialism**

This is the situation as Marx felt it. He had predicted the coming of Socialism and had shown in general terms how it would come about. The development of Capitalism went on, more or less closely following the lines predicted by him. But, apart from the Commune of Paris of 1871, which was obviously a premature effort, no revolutionary crisis developed until recently.

It is on this fact that most of the serious criticisms of Marx has turned. There is much in Marx's writings which seems to show that he had expected the working-class revolution to come about in his own day, or at any rate, within a fairly short period say during the nineteenth century. It did not however. Bourgeois and reformist critics seized upon this to argue that the whole conception of Marxism was false. They were assisted by other facts such as that instead of becoming worse the conditions of a substantial section of the European and American workers were tending to improve. (This tendency had been noted by Marx and Engels as Lenin points out in 'Imperialism' and the causes of it correctly assigned)

It is only necessary here to remark that Marx's economic analysis was an abstract one. He did not take into account in his theoretical discussion of wage rates such factors as Trade Unionism and the exploitation of the world market by British or other industrial capital, which obviously tended to alter the practical situation a good deal. Similarly in 'Capital' he did not discuss the effect which the export of capital and the establishment of the colonies would have upon economic and political developments. In his political analysis, the former factors Trade Unionism and similar matters he of course recognised and assessed at their full value. But this is probably not the case with the new factors introduced into the situation by Imperialism. This could not be foreseen fully at that time. It is this which accounts mainly for the discrepancies which critics have pointed out between the line of development he predicted and what has actually followed.

The discrepancies however are not fundamental. The effect of the Imperialist development of Capitalism was simply to delay its collapse. The overthrow of Capitalism which Marx may have expected then is taking place now, some half a century later. But at the present day it is impossible to deny the essential correctness of the Marxian conceptions. The early Marxists were mistaken about the time-scale, but about the nature and direction of the developments they were correct. Professor Laski (P. 1782) admits this in part: "The conclusions, that is to say, which Marx built upon his theory of surplus value, are in large part true, even though the theory of surplus value is itself erroneous." (page 112).

The conclusions referred to are (pages 112 and 113) the poverty of the workers, the eventual economic and cultural decay of Capitalism, the class war and international war. He repeats, (page 113):—

".....even when the largest mitigations have been made the broad outline of Marx's conclusions would be in sober fact unanswerable."

To work this out theoretically was the achievement principally of Lenin. His analysis of Imperialism made it perfectly clear that it is the period when Marx's deductions of the collapse of Capitalism from the self-destructive tendencies which he found within it, and as a consequence the world revolution, are being fulfilled. This is primarily what we mean by the term.

Lenin's "Imperialism" (P. 528) gives a complete theoretical treatment and a picture of the situation up to the time when it was written (1915). The Programme of the Communist International also gives a complete analysis of the whole matter, but is highly condensed. It is thought desirable here to give very shortly a summary of the facts which will show that our estimate of the nature of the present period of history is correct.

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### **The Concentration of Capital**

By 1914 Capitalism with its contradictions had ripened. The concentration and centralisation of capital had gone to extreme

lengths. In all the principal Capitalist countries the chief industries were concentrated in the hands of a small number of huge firms, which might even, through trusts, rings etc. act for some purposes almost as one. Further the banking system had acquired enormous importance, and had become not only concentrated in itself, but interconnected closely with all the main industries. (See "Imperialism", and 'The Workers' Register of Labour and Capital' )

Capitalism in each country from a large class of competing individuals, containing many sub-divisions and clashes of interest, had become something approaching a single closely integrated structure, of enormous economic power, in absolutely undivided control of the State machine. That is not to say that within the bounds of individual countries the anarchic character of Capitalism had disappeared though this was approached in some industries. But competition had been transferred to a large extent to the international sphere. From about the middle of the 19th century other capitalist countries began to overtake Great Britain hitherto easily foremost in economic development, and international competition became acute.

### **The Division of the World**

From about 1870 the effort to acquire and monopolise foreign markets, sources of raw materials and fields for investments led to a rapid competitive rush for the appropriation of backward countries as the colonies of the advanced powers, so that within two or three decades the world was almost completely divided up and brought forcibly under the sway of the leading capitalist countries.

The most sensational case was that of the partition of Africa, among the Empires of Germany, France, Belgium, Italy and Britain and its subordinate allies, Spain and Portugal. This partition gave rise to repeated clashes among the Imperialist powers themselves, between Britain and France over Egypt, the Sudan and Tangiers, between Britain and Germany over South Africa and West Africa, etc. But the expansion of the Capitalist Empires went on in other spheres. In Asia the British, French,

Japanese and Russian Empires all acquired "possessions", and the resulting competition led to friction between Britain and Germany in the near East, between Britain and Russia over Central Asia, and to war between Japan and Russia over Manchuria. At the same time nearly all the leading capitalist powers established their centres and "spheres of influence" in China, the United States of America, Japan, Britain and Germany divided even the Pacific Islands and the United States went to war with Spain over colonies in the West Indies.

### **The Export of Capital**

The reason why these regions were 'protected' or (in most cases) annexed, and thus subjected to direct and continuous military and political compulsion, in contrast to the previous trading policy was partly the growing competition among the powers, and partly the change in the nature of Capitalism which brought it about that a growing branch of Capitalist activity, which was soon to become supreme, was the investment of capital in the colonies. Marx had formulated the law of the progressive decrease in the rate of profit on capital (in the third volume of *Capital*) and this was borne out by the facts. But owing to the backward conditions of the colonial countries — cheap labour etc — far higher profits could be made there. Consequently when the decline in the possibilities of remunerative investment began to be felt and the possibilities of foreign investment demonstrated capital began to flow in larger and larger quantities to the backward countries and their exploitation was rapidly begun.

The Labour Research Department publication 'British Imperialism in Egypt' (P 62) estimates the total British capital invested in Egypt as £ 200 millions. Other publications in the Labour Research Department "Colonial Series" give data which show that investments in Government loans only in West Africa amount to at least £ 37 millions ('British Imperialism in West Africa, page 47 onwards) in East Africa £ 24 millions ('British Imperialism in East Africa', (P 1080), page 5 onwards), in Malaya £ 21.5 millions ('British Imperialism in Malaya')

Estimates of the investment of British capital in India are usually given at about £ 700 millions (Brockway "The Indian Crisis", page 41 for example) A large proportion of these date from before the war

The export of capital is not confined to colonies, it goes to all, but especially of course to backward countries We can cite the heavy British and French investments and loans to Czarist Russia to which we shall refer later the big investment of British and American capital in South America and the American investments in almost all countries at the present time The export of capital is a characteristic feature of monopolist-Imperialist Capitalism and helps to explain its brutal and violent character Wherever capital goes there warships go to protect it

### **The Imperialist State**

Colonial policy is not the only manifestation of Imperialism At the same time as these developments were going on in all the leading capitalist countries the State machine dominated exclusively by the big monopolist bourgeoisie was strengthened against both internal and external enemies

The class-struggle continued to develop within the Imperialist countries The Trade Union organisations of the workers had grown to formidable size and in several of the leading countries numbered millions of members while the working-class parties had achieved great advances and threatened to invade the political preserves of the bourgeoisie The corruption of the leading section of the workers and their organisations promoted by the objective conditions, and actively practised by the agents of the bourgeoisie, held off this menace for the time being but the State forces had also to be strengthened against it

The State forces were mobilised to increase the competitive ability of Capitalist firms in the world market Tariffs were universally increased The State interfered more and more in industry, in some cases taking concerns of importance to Capitalism generally out of private hands in the interest of efficiency Elementary education became general—in Britain it was made compulsory in 1870, admittedly in order to increase the

competitive power of British industry. Another characteristic innovation of the immediate pre-war period in Britain was the political branch of the C.I.D.

State action on behalf of capital was not confined to economic matters. Armaments were increased enormously (British navalism, French and German militarism), alliances and secret treaties were made and broken in all directions and an intensive Imperialist and militarist propaganda was conducted in preparation for the coming war, which was bound to arise from the struggle among the powers for the appropriation and redivision of the colonies.

### **The First Great Imperialist War**

The accumulation of capital on the anarchic individualist basis characteristic of Capitalism had progressed in the way predicted by Marx to the point when the system could longer go on smoothly but necessarily gave rise to catastrophe. This took the form of the war of 1914-18. The fundamental issue in that war was the rivalry between the Imperialism of Germany and that of Great Britain, two of the three greatest powers in the world. There were minor issues—Austrian versus Russian Imperialism, French versus German Imperialism, Balkan Nationalism, which can hardly be called Imperialism at all, and so on. But the war was essentially an Imperialist war, arising from the ripening defects or contradictions in the Capitalist system. This is now admitted. Mr. H. N. Brailsford says, (P. 48, page 160), "The motives of competitive capitalist Imperialism which on both sides led up to the outbreak of the war, and prolonged it until the "knock-out" blow could be delivered..... "

The war arose from the weaknesses of Capitalism, but it also accentuated them. It resulted in a tremendous destruction of wealth and economic dislocation which lasted for long after it had ceased. And it sharpened the class-struggle so acutely that actually during the war the first successful Russian Revolution took place and the proletariat took power. This was followed by revolutions, forced mainly by the working class, in the German, Austrian and Turkish Empires, which completed or advanced the

work of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in those countries, splitting them up into a number of bourgeois States. The working-class did not stop there. In Hungary the proletariat seized and retained power for some months, and in Bavaria for a few days, while unsuccessful revolutionary movements of great intensity developed in Finland, Germany, Austria, Italy and elsewhere, and movements only less intense developed in France and Britain (see P. 48, also P. 1204, page 725 onwards).

### **The Post-War Period**

The intense wave of revolutionary activity died down by about 1922, to be succeeded by a period of relative stability, at any rate in Europe and America. It is often concluded therefore that the period of danger has passed; Capitalism has survived the most formidable assault which has yet been directed against it and will be able to avoid any such risk in future. This is an absolute delusion as the briefest study of the facts of history since the last war will show.

The tendencies which were noticed previously towards the concentration and centralisation of capital, and its fusion with the State have continued, and in fact have been greatly accelerated, by the events of the war and post-war period. The Workers' Register of Labour and Capital" (1923) says on page 223, "The prosperity of capital during the war years led to the same process of trustification and capital inflation, as we have observed in Great Britain, in France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, the same factors can be found." On page 130 it states: "The tendency to trustification and other forms of the concentration of capitalist activities was of course well developed in Great Britain before the war, but in the post-war period the development was extraordinarily rapid." Among the examples given are Lever brothers (a chemical combine) which controls 160 companies, which are responsible among other things for 70 per cent of the total British output of soap, and the Royal Dutch Shell combine (oil firms uniting some 120 companies throughout the world) with an aggregate capital of over £ 246 millions. It further cites the case of the Federation of British Industries, a general industrial organisation, (page 143) which in 1920 claimed that it

represented a combined capital of £ 4,000 millions. "The history of the Federation of British Industries with its kindred associations is in itself the most significant record of the consolidation of British capitalist interests since the war."

These developments cannot but have the effect of intensifying the crisis. In spite of the fact of the relative stabilisation of Capitalism, the post-war period has been one of general economic crisis and international rivalry, and the class-struggle has remained at an extremely acute pitch.

Hardly a year has passed since the war when in Europe itself there has not been some rising or movement of the working-class of at least a semi-revolutionary character. We can cite the events of 1923, when Germany was within a very short distance of actual revolution, and the workers held Hamburg for several days; the rising in Vienna in 1925; the British General Strike of 1926; the perpetual disturbances accompanied by intensified persecution of the workers and peasants—in Poland, the Baltic and Balkan State, Italy, Spain etc., the establishment and perpetuation of ruthless forms of bourgeois dictatorship, such as Fascism, in all these countries, means that the class-struggle is so acute that ordinary methods (so-called democracy) will not suffice to maintain the rule of the bourgeoisie.

Subsequently in the last three years a definite sharpening of the crisis had been noticeable. From the end of 1929 a very acute economic depression of world-wide character has developed, which has strained the resources of the bourgeoisie in many countries almost to a breaking point. The latest news from Germany shows a rapid growth in the revolutionary spirit of the working-class, and the possibility of a Fascist *coup d'état* promoted by big capital to defend itself against the workers. The same sort of development is also indicated in Austria.

But the chief characteristic of this period, to be seen even before the present economic crisis, is the growing acuteness of international relations, and the obvious preparations by all the leading powers for a new Imperialist war. It was perfectly clear



from the beginning that the first great Imperialist war of 1914-1918 (the "war to end war") had not settled the difficulties and contradictions which gave rise to it. Mr. H. N. Brailsford was able to write in 1921: "The year 1920 saw the completion of the peace treaties, but even before the last of the series had been drafted the impossibility of executing its predecessors was admitted.....the greater part of the Continent, and that by far the most populous and productive part has dropped out of our economic system of exchange....." (P. 48, page 160). The political results of the war and the peace treaties had been to place the defeated powers in a position of artificial inferiority in their immediate economic position, and in their political, colonial and military status, which their fundamental economic strength could not allow to remain permanently. The result was a struggle by these countries especially Germany, to recover economically from the effects of the war, the Entente blockade and the seizure and division of their territories by the victorious Allies, with the object of regaining their colonial possessions and their military and naval strength, and hence of revising the Versailles Treaty and the Reparations Settlements. This has been notoriously one of the chief causes of disturbances in Europe since the war, and resulted in what was practically war on one occasion when the French army invaded the Ruhr Valley in 1923. It is clear that a section of the German bourgeoisie are now using this campaign against the inferior position of Germany to strengthen the Fascist Movement, the growth of which is regarded by the bourgeoisie of neighbouring States as a menace. It is unnecessary here to go into all the international contradictions which render almost every frontier in Europe a possible starting point for the next general war.

### **Great Britain versus United States of America**

More important is the fact that the last war failed to solve the question—which Imperialist power was to rule the world? Every Imperialism by its nature cannot stop anywhere short of the

attempt to solve the question. Great Britain had succeeded in removing Germany from its path for the time being, only to find a far more formidable Imperialist rival, the U.S.A., established in its place. The rivalry of British and American Imperialisms, with the antagonism between the Capitalist Powers as a whole and the U.S.S.R., have been the most important issues in international politics since the war. With the latter question we shall deal later. Here we are concerned with the former.

The origin of this antagonism needs no elaboration. The British Empire and the U.S.A. are the two strongest Imperialist Powers. The British Empire is old established, already past the zenith of its power, with a large colonial Empire. The U.S.A. is a young power, still expanding, requiring more and more markets and fields for investments, and hence colonies. Their interests clash at all points. The British bourgeoisie, with that of other European States are heavily in debt to America. American interests are driving the British out of nearly all spheres where the British previously were supreme; in Canada and Central and South America, and even in Australia; in China the British interests suffered heavily from the effects of the revolution while the American bourgeoisie were able to safeguard theirs to a comparatively great extent; generally American exports previously consisting mainly of raw materials etc. are increasing rapidly and becoming largely manufactured goods, thus threatening the position of British bourgeoisie which depends very greatly upon their exports of manufactured goods. Even in India, American imports are increasing at the expense of the British.

After the Washington Conference of 1921 there followed a period of British-American truce, through which nevertheless the fundamental antagonism of the two powers could be seen from time to time, as in the rivalry between the British Royal Dutch Shell Oil Combine and the American Standard Oil Company and in the American Debt Settlement in 1923. But the antagonism has become far more open in the last few years. This was indicated by

the failure of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva in 1927, when the British and American naval experts found it impossible to agree. The U.S.A. immediately announced a big Five Year Naval Programme, estimated to cost 750 to 1000 million dollars, which included twenty five 10,000 ton cruisers, 32 submarines etc. (P. 2491, 15th January, 1929) and Britain also went on with a naval programme. Next followed the so-called exposure of the Anglo-French Agreement to pool naval forces against America and the reports of the existence of an Anglo-French-Japanese Alliance. These agreements were officially dissolved but the acute tension between Britain and America remained not even to be diminished by the much advertised Kellogg Pact of 1928.

Before the Pact itself was signed the reservations put in by Britain alone served to render it a farce. These reservations included almost all the spheres—Russia, Persia, Afghanistan, etc. except the U.S.A. itself—in which it was at all likely that Great Britain would need to fight. And its actual terms were so vague as to have little meaning. It was later confessed in the United States Senate that in effect it did not bind any nation, (P. 577 Spark). In any case it served no purpose of the sort for which it was ostensibly intended. The competitive building of warships went on. The state of public feeling was revealed in that year by the American Admiral Plunkett in his famous speech in which he said "We (the U.S.A.) are nearer to a war than ever before. Before we venture to dispute the rule of the ocean with any other powers, we shall have another war, as sure as we are sitting in this room..... Yes, I am thinking of Great Britain or of any other nation with whose interests we collide (P. 2491, 15th January, 1929).

The effect upon British bourgeois opinion of the election of President Hoover, at the end of 1928 was also significant. He was greeted with almost undisguised hostility as the representative of the aggressive American Imperialism, whose regime could not fail to increase the vigour of the American assaults upon Britain's economic position.

The Anglo-American situation was one of the first matters taken up by the Labour Government. Mr. MacDonald repeatedly emphasised in his speeches the dangers of the position, and after

conversations with the American Ambassador took the almost unprecedented step of journeying to America while in office and calling upon President Hoover.

### **Naval "Disarmament"**

As a result, the Five Power Naval Disarmament Conference took place in London in 1930. Although it was found impossible finally to come to any agreement with two of the Powers, France and Italy, and it took some three months of breakdowns and resumptions to come to any agreement at all, the three Power Naval Agreement, the London Treaty, was eventually signed. The results of this agreement, which is to remain in force until 1936, are a certain slowing down in the proposed (on paper) rate of construction of the larger ships; no restriction on submarine construction and open recognition by Britain of America's right to naval equality.

The last mentioned aspect of the Treaty has been criticised by the opponents of the Labour Government but has nevertheless been passed. To conclude however that the result of the efforts of the Labour Government and the Naval Disarmament Conference is that the danger of Anglo-American war has disappeared, is quite unsound. The objective causes of the antagonism remain—armaments are only a symptom—and will be accentuated by the present economic crisis, which emphasises more than ever the need of Imperialism for markets.

The general nature of these "disarmament" agreements is beautifully illustrated by a leading article in the Times, London of 11th February, 1930. "At the Washington Conference Japan was naturally reluctant to scrap her newest ship, the "Matsu", which had just been completed and was running her trials; after some discussion it was agreed that both she and her sister ship, the "Nagato" should be retained and that as a counterpoise the U.S.A. should also complete ships of the latest Maryland type which were under construction but which it had originally been proposed to scrap. Since Great Britain had no ship, except

perhaps the "Hood", which was comparable with these in fighting power, she also was given permission to build two new up-to-date vessels, the "Rodney" and the "Nelson."

This "disarmament" agreement seems to have restrained the construction of armaments in a similar way. The conference ended in April. In May two announcements appeared in the press of the Bills introduced by the Chairman of the American House of Representatives. ".....for the construction of war craft involving an expenditure of 1000 million dollars which he declares necessary in order to secure American naval parity with Britain in the next decade." (Reuter, Washington May 7) and of the introduction of a Bill into the American Congress on behalf of the War Department asking for the appropriation of £ 900,000 for the construction of a great dirigible as a "flying fort" for the army (described as metal clad, carrying two aeroplanes and ten machine guns etc.) and in September 1930 (Manchester Guardian Weekly 5th September) we find the announcement of a new Japanese programme: "Stimulated by the remarkable progress of aviation and by the London Treaty which have increased the necessity of expanding the air force, the Government is faced by the necessity of establishing an air policy, says the Asahi. The scheme involves:

- (1) To expand the present naval-air force by 16 squadrons to 30.5 squadrons;
- (2) the number of aeroplanes on boat-carriers to be increased from 100 to 200; and
- (3) an experimental and manufacturing works.

The scheme also provides for reforms in the equipment of air-craft carriers and an increase in air-ships. The total cost will be £ 20 millions.

We should also recall in this connection the decision in the recent Imperial Conference to complete the big naval and air base at Singapore, which has very great significance in view of the very sharp clash of Imperialist interests in the Pacific, which is widely expected to be the principal scene of the next great war.

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**The "Armed Camp"**

The whole situation is not, however, contained in the Anglo-American question or in the Pacific. All Imperialist powers contribute to the sum of contradictions which render war the inevitable outcome of present developments. It is well-known that the leading powers with their subordinate allies constitute an "armed camp" to an extent far surpassing the preparations for the last war. The very acute antagonism between Italian and French Imperialisms has been referred to; when at the Naval Disarmament Conference the other three powers were able to come to some sort of formal agreement, these two powers could not even do that. Further it was because of the clash of interest between Britain and France that the conference came to no agreement on the question of submarines. The British, who are threatened as in the last war by a hostile submarine fleet proposed their complete abolition, or short of that drastic limitation. The French insisted on an advanced submarine programme, as their only effective weapon against the otherwise overwhelming British fleet.

As with Naval, so also with Military and Air forces. In view of the tremendous growth in the mechanical, chemical and general technical equipment of armies, there has been a tendency to abandon the numerically large armies of the pre-war period and to replace them by relatively small but highly trained forces. Nevertheless the actual number of men kept under arms by the five principal powers is greater than before the war (P. 2491).

The Simon Commission (Volume II, Part 8, Chapter 3) quotes some figures of expenditure on armaments for 1928, as follows:—

U.S.A. 4,453 millions gold francs (£178 millions);

Great Britain 2,900 (£ 116 millions);

U.S.S.R. 2,440 (£ 97 millions),

France 2,286 (£ 91 millions);

Italy 1,333 (£ 53 millions),

Japan 1,215 (£ 49 millions); and

India 1,069 (£ 43 millions).

They state further that the annual expenditure by Britain on armaments has increased from 1913 by 48.9 per cent, i.e. it has increased slightly if we take into account the difference of price

levels. This in spite of the much advertised "disarmament" by Great Britain, which has been held up as an example to other nations.

We have spent some time on the question of armaments because it is a matter of importance. The impression is widespread, and is carefully cultivated, that the series of pacts, protocols and disarmament conferences, (another is about to take place shortly at Geneva) are "outlawing war" and rendering it impossible. We have given enough facts to show what is the real nature of these agreements. So far as they attempt limitation at all it is on the basis of paper programmes, which are probably put forward for the purpose of such bargaining; or it is in the sphere of obsolete types of armaments, such as the very big and expensive battleships, which many naval experts now believe to be out of date. They effect no real disarmament and in fact may even stimulate armament construction as the examples above show. The real purpose is to deceive the public

It is hardly necessary to point out that the League of Nations also plays this part. The League is an instrument primarily of the Imperialist policy of France and Great Britain, for the pursuit of such items of policy as they can carry on in common, such as the military control and financial penetration of Central and Eastern Europe, and offensive against the Soviet Union. (See Labour Research Department "White Paper" number 18). The League of Nations will not prevent war, when the Imperialist powers which control it, want war. It will on the contrary help in the preparation of war by deceiving innocent people before war begins, and when it has begun by sanctifying the war as one waged with its approval.

### **The Colonial Revolutions**

We must touch briefly on two other points. The period of Imperialism is distinguished not only by the self-destructive tendencies of Capitalism, but by the advance of the conscious revolution against Capitalism. We have mentioned the working-class revolutionary movement in the more advanced Capitalist countries. The period since the war has also been distinguished by a tremendous wave of colonial revolutions against Imperialist control. This series began with the Easter rising in Dublin in 1916, and the Irish revolution continued as a more or less open war until

1922. The rising in the Japanese colony of Korea followed in 1919, simultaneous with the Afghan War of Independence and the Indian and Egyptian Movements. Then followed the risings in the French Mediterranean colonies in 1924-25, the great Chinese Revolution beginning its most active phase in 1925, the insurrection in Java in 1926, and the movements in India and Indo-China in 1930. The series of revolutions in South America in 1930, stimulated by the general economic crisis, are also no doubt to be traced to the revolt of the bourgeois class of those countries against their status of de facto colonies of British and American capital. The revolt has not stopped at these major colonies; repeatedly movements occur in the British and French African colonies, Nigeria, Kenya etc., and among the South African Negrors; in Iraq, Arabia, Malta, Cyprus etc. and even in such remote regions as Samoa.

### **The Soviet Union**

Finally the failure of the bourgeoisie of the world to crush the Soviets in the wars of intervention of 1918-21, was a serious blow from which Capitalism cannot recover. The huge population and resources of the Soviet Union are withdrawn from the influence of the Capitalist system, and no longer form a colony for the exploitation of Finance-Capital. The Soviet system, growing steadily stronger as its industrialisation drive progresses, weakens the position of the bourgeois world, and strengthens the position of the working-class in its struggle. In spite of its pre-occupation with internal difficulties and international complications, the bourgeoisie of the world, especially Great Britain, are compelled to maintain their diplomatic offensive against the Soviet Union, to isolate it, to maintain an armed cordon of border states, financed by the bigger powers, and to keep up their propaganda against the Soviet Union at full blast. Among the factors determining the character of the present period, one of the most important is the Soviet Union.

### **Imperialism—Dying Capitalism**

Lenin in his discussion of the subjects of Imperialism (P. 528) gives after an economic analysis the definition which the Magistrate quotes and misunderstands (Committal Order, pages 27,28):



"Imperialism is Capitalism in that phase of development in which the domination of monopolies and Finance-Capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired very great importance; in which the division of the world among the big international trusts has begun, in which the partition of all the territories of the earth among the great capitalist powers has been completed." This is the essence of Imperialism considered from an economic point of view. But then Lenin proceeds in his later chapters to discuss Imperialism as a period in history. He points out the elements of decay in Imperialism—the inevitable result of monopolist Capitalism, which is the origin of Imperialism (page 108). He shows how investment tends to assume a more and more prominent place among the activities of the Capitalists (page 111). The formation of a large stratum of absolutely idle and parasitic rentiers or those who depend upon investments (largely colonial investments) is characteristic (page 109), and as the programme of the Communist International States (P. 2339, page 3), this and other features are leading to a cultural decay which signals the approaching end of the Capitalist system. The increasingly deadly widespread economic crises, the growing class-struggle, the ever more destructive armaments, the catastrophic wars—all point the same way. Lenin sums it up by saying "From all that has been said in this book of the economic nature of Imperialism, it follows that we must define it as Capitalism in transition, or more precisely as dying Capitalism".

This will explain the importance which we attach to the conception of Imperialism, and why we have spent so much time in saying that Lenin's account of the matter is borne out completely by the facts of today. The Imperialist period sees the realisation of the results of Marxist analysis. It is the period when the self-destructive tendencies within Capitalism are coming to fruition, when Capitalism as a system is coming to an end, and all the parts of the structure of Capitalism all over the world including India, are involved in crisis and head towards revolution.

### III. SOCIALISM AND THE SOVIET UNION

We have explained the Marxian conception of how Capitalism develops towards Socialism; how the technical basis for a Socialist society is produced by Capitalism, but at the same time Capitalism itself is unable to use that technique for the benefits of mankind, and under the strain of its own inconsistencies and weaknesses eventually collapses, or rather is overthrown by the working-class, which proceeds to organise Socialism on the ruins and achievements of Capitalism. We showed that we characterise the present period of Imperialism as the decisive period when the collapse of Capitalism is taking place. We can go further and show that in some countries already Capitalism has been overthrown and Socialism is being constructed by the working-class. These countries form the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

The U.S.S.R. and its achievements naturally play an extremely important part in our system of ideas and our propaganda. We feel it one of our most imperative duties to defend the U.S.S.R. as the Socialists fatherland of the working-class, against all possible attack or injury. The U.S.S.R. also plays a very important part in this case, and has in fact been made the villain of the piece by the Prosecution. This again is natural. Imperialism feels the most deadly enmity towards the stronghold of Socialism, which stands as a living example to the oppressed all over the world of the advantages of overthrowing their Imperialist oppressors and the way to do it.

#### **The Russian Revolution as Socialist Revolution**

We must first of all refute one of the oldest and most wild reproaches against the Russian revolution, which the Counsel for the Prosecution faithfully repeats, that, according to the Marxian theory the Russian Revolution ought not to have occurred at all. And that, having occurred it is not a genuine Socialist Revolution at all but a bourgeois revolution in disguise, and its outwardly proletarian appearance will eventually give way to open Capitalism. This theory, which was first propounded by Kautsky, the renegade, maintains that, as Marx held that the proletarian revolution arises from the development of Capitalism itself, it should take place first in the most advanced Capitalist country.

Lenin in replying to Kautsky explained the apparent contradiction once for all. He pointed out that Capitalism comes in the Imperialist period to embrace the whole world, and the crisis of Capitalism leaves no corner of the world unshaken. When the crisis develops to the point of revolution as it did during the first world war, revolution first breaks out among those countries which are sufficiently advanced to be ripe for it in what he describes as the "weakest link in the chain" of Imperialism. He means that country in which all the circumstances, the peculiarities of its internal history, its position and fate in the war, etc. etc. combine to render it least able to resist the working-class attack, and simultaneously to stimulate that attack to the highest degree.

It is clear that this view is not in contradiction with Marxism but is simply the application of the theory concretely to the actual situation, instead of an abstract conception of it. The occurrence of the proletarian revolution in Russia first among the Imperialist countries is no refutation of Marxism.

As to the socialist nature of the revolution, even if there could ever have been any doubt about it, recent developments must dispel that doubt completely, as we shall show later.

### **Capitalism in Russia**

We have shown the socialist revolution in general terms as the outcome of the development of Capitalism, and as carried through by the proletariat which Capitalism brings into existence. Russia, though until March 1917 politically an almost mediaeval absolute monarchy, was a capitalist country. P. 48 ("Labour International Hand Book," 1921), pages 67-68 says: "From 1890 onward this human society (Russian)..... began to undergo a profound social change which was finally to bring about the downfall of the unaltering Czardom. This change can be described as the coming of Capitalism with an accompanied unprecedented increase in population-capitalist industries developed with enormous rapidity in the towns." P. 1176 ("Illustrated History of the Russian Revolution 1917") contains some data. It states (page 5) that from 1890 to 99 pig iron production in Russian increased by 190 per cent, and by 1900 Russia was the fourth largest producer of pig

iron in the world. In the same period iron and steel production increased by 116 per cent, hard coal by 131 per cent, mineral oil by 132 per cent. Cotton production by 1900 was only less than that of Great Britain or America. Between 1893 and 1900 the number of workers employed in factories increased by 5,15,000.

The same volume gives on page 93 facts of the same type for a later period. "From 1909 to 1913 pig iron production increased (after a slump between 1900 and 1909) by 65 per cent, metal goods by 51 per cent, steel rails by 24 per cent, cast iron by 61 per cent, sheet iron by 20 per cent, girders and sleepers by 88 per cent." These figures are stated to be typical for the period.

It is clear that if backward compared with Britain and Germany, Russia was becoming an industrial country, in which, though still in a minority compared with the peasants, the industrial workers would naturally play a very important part.

Conditions were then prepared for the revolution, in that the essential social basis, the proletariat, was present. The position of the peasantry was likewise one which rendered revolution necessary. The peasants in pre-war Russia, like those in India today, were still only very partially emancipated from feudal conditions. P. 1176 states (pages 3 and 4) that the land was to a very great extent in hands of large owners, the majority of whom did not cultivate their land directly by Capitalist methods, but allowed it to be worked by tenants on semi-feudal lines, for very high rents, or for direct labour on the owners' land, or a high proportion of the peasants' own produce, etc. In these conditions the efficiency of agriculture was not promoted. The figures given actually show a fall in the wealth of the peasantry. From 1886 to 1898 the number of horses owned by peasants in a certain region of European Russia fell from 19.6 to 17 millions, and of oxen from 34.6 to 24.5 millions. The landowning class was a "fetter upon production" and the conditions of Russian agriculture were thus objectively revolutionary.

It is a matter of common knowledge how oppressive and reactionary was the rule of the Czardom, and how it drove even a large part of the bourgeoisie and intellectuals into opposition. It is this factor which is often held to constitute the feature of the

Russian situation which is mainly responsible for the character of the revolution, and is put forward to support the view that the Russian Revolution must be unique, as the Czarist regime was a unique system of Government. We cannot discuss the matter fully here. But we must point out that while Czarism undoubtedly was one factor which went to render revolution in Russia comparatively easy, and accelerated it, it was but one factor of many. And further that to assert that Czardom is unique is incorrect. The regime in India for example is distinguished from the Czardom only by its greater unpopularity, owing to its foreign nature and the greater efficiency of its repressive machinery. Finally we would point out how feeble the opposition of the bourgeoisie to the Czardom was. Only a section of the intellectuals joined the revolutionary movements. In the revolutionary days of 1905-07, when the masses rose in open revolution, and formed their Soviets, the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals continued to act constitutionally and demanded a Duma. Owing to the political tension of the time, the Czardom granted the demand, but when the workers' and peasants' movement had at length been crushed, the "constitutional" movement was brushed aside. P 48 says on page 69 "The money thus acquired (from Britain) was used to reestablish the shaken autocracy and to crush the constitutional as well as the revolutionary movement." And on page 73 "It must be remembered that the Duma (in 1917) was no longer the representative body, elected by universal suffrage, which the revolt of 1905 had wrung from the autocrats. To abolish the Duma by slow degrees had been the policy of 1906 onwards. Accordingly the franchise had been restricted for the Second Duma (of 1907) and still further for the Third Duma and the Fourth Duma, in such a way that the aggregate of peasants and workers' votes counted for less than the votes of the wealthy classes and nobility." The bourgeois Democrats and Liberals, deprived of their source of strength, the mass movement, had to give way before the attack of the autocracy.

Similarly when in March 1917 the revolt of the masses, the workers, peasants and soldiers, brought about the fall of the Czar, and the bourgeoisie were able to form a Government, their feebleness was equally pronounced.

### **The Collapse of Capitalism**

Conditions under the Czardom were therefore ripe for revolution all round. In this sense Russia was the "weakest link in the Imperialist chain." But the matter went further than that. The revolution was in general terms due to the development of Capitalism in Russia and the crisis of the Capitalist system which culminated in the war. That crisis was particularly acute in Russia, owing partly to the political system, which was unsuited to a Capitalist economy and was corrupt and inefficient, but owing mainly to the relative backwardness of industry, its very great dependence on supplies from abroad, and the tremendous strain thrown upon it by a modern large scale war. The chaos in which the whole life of Russia was thrown by the war surpassed that of probably any other country. P. 48 says on page 71: ".....by the late spring of 1915 the ammunition of Russia was exhausted, her armaments defective, her organisation in pieces, and her peasant conscripts in many cases without even the rifles wherewith to defend themselves against the exterminating fire of the German and Austrian battalions. Her bolt was shot. The degree of disorganisation almost surpasses belief. It is on record that on single track lines the railway trucks which had delivered their loads were actually derailed in order to enable later trains to be brought to the terminus. The great retreat of the summer and the early autumn of 1915 dealt a final blow to the prestige of the Czardom. For a period the renaissance of nationalist enthusiasm among the manufacturing classes brought forward the production of munitions of war, but this was accomplished at the expense of other forms of manufacture essential for home production. Russia had been exhausted before. The net result of these final efforts was to make recovery from that exhaustion impossible." All other histories give the same account. It was the collapse of Capitalism in Russia which brought about the revolution.

### **The Mass Revolution**

This brings us to the second part of the theory of the Prosecution. Not only was the Russian Revolution, in their view, a contradiction to the Marxist theory but it was not a popular movement at all. It was carried through by a "small and resolute body of men," a "tiny minority," who had seized power presumably by a secretly prepared *coup d'etat*, maintained their power "by means of the OGPU and the Red Army," "terrorising into submission the bulk of the population, etc. Such a ridiculous theory puts the Prosecution

on a level with those obscurantist fanatics who attribute all revolutions from 1789 onwards to the hidden hand of Jewish finance and the Freemasons and hardly deserves our attention. But it requires some answer, since the Prosecution attack on the Russian Revolution means by implication that this is the policy of the Communist International, and incidentally of ourselves. "The Illustrated History of the Russian Revolution"(P. 1176) makes it quite clear throughout its account that the revolution was a popular movement, in which the great majority of the workers and peasants took part at the decisive moment. Even in the 1905 revolution the history says (page 18 ): "It is difficult to give an idea of the diversity and richness of the movement which set their stamp upon the period between January and October 1905. It must be pointed out chiefly that during these months, the movement gained enormously in extent. Each month, each week, each day, brought ever new sections of the workers into the revolution. The news of the revolution and of the activities of the workers in the big industrial centres reached the smaller towns and there called forth an echo of the movement of the cities. It can be stated that in the middle of 1905 all workers of Russia took more or less active part in the revolution.

"It is of course true that the working masses did not at once come forth with clear definite demands. In many places the movement began with industrial demands, or arose from economic causes but very soon the workers added economic slogans to these demands. The movement was transformed into a political mass movement."

P. 48 says of the revolution of March 1917 (page 71): "The revolution began in Petrograd with a strike movement of the working-class population, who were suffering starvation through the failure of the bread supply. The regiment sent to suppress the revolt joined the strikers, and immediately the Czardom collapsed." Of the July rising (1917) the same account says (pages 73-74): "In response to the pressure of the Entente, Alexander Kerensky, the Minister for war,(and later Premier, succeeded by speeches in stimulating the army to a fresh effort; and in June under General Brusil of the Russian armies made a great drive forward into Galicia. The effect on the Allied Governments, who judged events in Russia from the standpoint of the war, was reassuring. Inside Russia, where everything was judged from the standpoint of the coming peace, the effect was far other wise. The revolt arose among the masses. The movement was purely spontaneous. The Soviets (Menshevik majority ) were officially against it, and the

Bolsheviks did not take part in it until they were convinced that it was not a forced or conspiratorial movement but a really popular rising." And of the November Revolution, it says (page 74): "Meantime the refusal of the Allies to discuss war claims on the basis of No Annexations and No Indemnities, the failure to promulgate the law to give the land to the peasants, and the steadily increasing misery and famine brought matters to a head.

"The Bolsheviks who had been chary of joining in the July rising waited until they could feel assured that the masses of the proletariat were ready to revolt. Signs of this assurance were not wanting. In the Democratic Conference summoned by Kerensky in the last days of September to base his retention of power upon some expression of general assent, it was found that no less than 70 out of 110 representatives of the Trade Unions were Bolsheviks. They waited however for the elections to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. In the Soviet elections it had been found that Petrograd, like Paris in the French Revolution led the remainder of the country. Accordingly when the Petrograd Soviet in September returned an overwhelming Bolshevik majority, the immediate transfer of all power to the Soviets was resolved upon forthwith."

Or consider the statement of a Social Democrat, Mr. H.N. Brailsford (P. 1777) written after a visit to Russia in 1927: ".....the political system which prevails in Russia is not open to debate. It was set up by a *coup d'etat*. It had next to be defended against armed opponents in the civil war. It became the accepted basis of political and economic life, because during the civil war, after bitter experience of its alternatives, the masses of the population did on the whole rally to it, did on the whole defend it, at a terrible cost in blood and suffering, and did on the whole acquiesce in the leadership of the Communist Party. What was won at such a cost of life and treasure, that Party will not expose to the hazards of argument or the chances of the voting urn. On that point the rulers of Russia are as frank as they are determined. Whether in fact a free election preceded by an equally free period of public controversy would result in a majority for the system, one can only conjecture. My own belief is that a decided majority would ratify it. The question is however academic; the experiment will never be tried. The Communists are content to argue as they have every right to do that whatever the arithmetic of heads might show the arithmetic of wills proved, against immense odds during the civil war, that the mobile and effective weight of the Russian people is on their side."



The view taken by Professor Laski is similar (P 1782, pages 42 and 43) "The revolution of course was no sudden or unexpected event, it was based upon a series of great failures and accelerated by the utter incapacity and corruption revealed by the Czarist Government during the war. Beginning in March, 1917, with the normal constitutional upheaval, its protagonists made the fatal error of assuming that the war was popular with the Russian people and that a change of system could be conducted coincidentally with its continuance. The Bolshevik Party, under Lenin's leadership made no such mistake. With the promise of immediate peace they were able to win over the army and the masses to their side."

Finally take the statement of a bourgeois critic of the Bolsheviks (Rene Fullop Miller, "The Mind and Face of Bolshevism" (P 123). After describing himself in the preface page XIII) as "objective" and "critical" in his approach to the revolution, he admits on the first page of the text "that the masses actually rule in Russia."

### **The Communist Party**

The revolution was, we conclude, a popular movement and supported and carried through by the majority of the population, and the Soviet Government remains a popular Government, genuinely representing the mass of the people. The Prosecution make much play with the fact that the Communist Party includes in its ranks only a small minority of the population—"on their own figures" about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  millions out of a total population of something like 180 millions." What would the Prosecution have? Must a ruling party include in its ranks 50 per cent of the population, or sacrifice its right to rule? What of the Indian Civil Service? Does it alone, or even with all the other officials great and small, and the princes and the landowners and the bourgeoisie, include half the population of India? Or does the Conservative Party include half the population of Great Britain? With its ranks absolutely open to any who wishes to enter, we doubt if the British Conservative Party has a membership proportionately equal to that of the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union, which is jealously kept clear of careerists and opportunists, membership of which involves even now harder work, lower pay and more rigorous punishment in case of crime, entry into which nevertheless is a coveted honour among the working masses.

### **“The Red Terror”**

The Prosecution have of course made much use of the “Red Terror.” Drawing its information apparently from such intelligent sources of information as Mr. Edmund Candler, it has striven to create all possible prejudice in the minds of the Court and the public against the Soviet Union by this means. It states that in the course of the Red Terror 2½ million people were killed by the OGPU. We wonder where this extraordinary piece of information comes from. So notorious an anti-Bolshevik as Mr. J. A. R. Marriott does not venture to go quite so far. He says one million and eight lakhs. These gentlemen are probably thinking of the casualties in the wars of intervention. (Those on the Soviet side are estimated at one million three lakhs and fifty thousand). In any case, however, how do these figures compare with the total of 9 millions killed during the Imperialist War of 1914-18 for the satisfaction of the greed of the bourgeoisie of Europe?

The Prosecution hold up the Bolsheviks as mere sadists who on seizing power wallowed in the blood of all who opposed them. Mr. M. Phillips Price, an ex-M.P., records in “My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution” (D 585, page 184) that one of the first acts of the Bolsheviks on attaining power was to abolish the death penalty (on November 30, 1917). The Red Terror was instituted some nine or ten months later in September 1918, when the agents of British and other foreign Governments began to blow up railway bridges and to assassinate the officials of the Soviet Government. On one day, September 5, Lenin was wounded and Uritsky and Volodarsky were killed by White Terrorists. (D 585, page 334). The Red Terror began officially on the 10th September (see also P 1176, page 583). Price gives the numbers killed and executed under the Red Terror for certain periods (page 337). In 1918, September to December, just over 6,000. In 1919 whole,

9,641. In 1920 the death sentence was again abolished until May, when a new intervention began from Poland. In 1920, May to July, the number of executions was 893. Total, something over 16,534. Compare this with the 300,000, principally Jews, killed under the White General Petlura in the Ukraine during his short intervention and regime (supported by the British Government) there. (W.J. Brown "Three Months in Russia," pages 125-126).

### **The New Economic Policy**

The Prosecution indulge in the usual propagandist nonsense in connection with the New Economic Policy, claiming that this means the abandonment of all that the revolution stood for, the triumph of capitalism and so on. The Prosecution are a little out of date. This is no longer the line of the bourgeois critics of the Soviet Union, whose lament is now the rate at which the growth of Socialist production and distribution is ousting even what remnants of Capitalism were allowed to persist. Facts have disproved all the calumnies against the New Economic Policy.

### **"Withering away"**

The Prosecution blunder equally badly over the question of the transition period and the "withering away" of the State. They are triumphant over the fact that the Soviet State has not yet begun to wither away and conclude that the thing is all eyewash and that it will never do so. Lenin made it quite clear that the process of withering away could not begin until all classes are abolished, i.e. until Socialism has been completely established, and consequently at least a generation or two has passed since the revolution. It is obvious in any case that while the Soviet regime remains confined to a fraction of the earth's surface, the rest being in the hands of the militant Imperialist states, no question of weakening the regime can be considered. We wonder if the Prosecution seriously expected the Soviet Government to complete all its tasks of reconstruction and establishment of a Socialist society, within a period of ten years, and then to abdicate in face of the hostile armies and the diplomatic intrigues of the bourgeoisie of the world. We need not deal further with the

propagandist nonsense of the Prosecution. Its intrinsic value is not such that it deserves even what reply we have given. Its source alone compels us to answer.

### **The Achievements of the Revolution**

In regard to the actual achievements of the revolutions, we must content ourselves with giving the briefest description and declaring our belief that in spite of all the difficulties that have faced it and are facing it, the Soviet Union has already made substantial progress towards Socialism.

The evidence before the court contains information which is mainly somewhat out of date. Nevertheless an idea can be obtained of the way in which conditions have been improved under the rule of the working-class.

As the background of any consideration to the progress of the Soviet Union, it is necessary to take into account the situation in which the Soviets took power. They did not inherit a "going concern" but an economic system which was admittedly backward and had shown its unfitness as we have already seen by collapsing after two or three years of war. The process of disorganisation went on for three more years after the revolution, until at last the wars of intervention had been dealt with. Price says (D 585, page 386) "The work of building up a Communist Commonwealth has been hindered from the first by the war waged on Russia by the forces of the European bondholders. The revolutionary war, if continued long enough, must result in reducing Eastern Europe to a condition in which not merely a co-operative Commonwealth but civilised life under any system will become impossible."

By 1920 industrial production had sunk to about 20 per cent, and agricultural production to about 50 per cent of that of 1913. The Soviet Union Year Book, 1930, states (page 67) that during the War (1914-17) 18 millions were mobilised and 2½ millions killed, the whole of industry, such as was left of it, was turned to war purposes, the population of the towns fell by 30 to 40 per cent, famines and epidemics carried off large numbers, the national wealth is estimated to have fallen from 92.5 to 59.3

milliard roubles, i.e. by 36 per cent. Such was the economic position when in 1920-21 steps were taken to revive production and establish a Socialist economy. At the same time the quality of the industrial population, at no time high, had deteriorated through the mobilisation of all the best and most skilled workers for the Red Army etc. The whole population was backward—about 80 per cent illiterate. Further when reconstruction was begun, it was undertaken entirely with the resources of the country itself. Practically no foreign credits, such as were used on a huge scale to revive the shattered economy of other countries of Eastern Europe after the war, were forthcoming.

This was the basis on which the Soviet regime had to build. We propose now to show very briefly what has been accomplished.

### **The Soviets**

The Soviets have historically two aspects, which should be distinguished. They are in the first place the organs of the revolutionary struggle of the masses. Set up by the workers and peasants in the period of the rising wave of revolution, they are the means through which the masses organise themselves and exercise their power in overthrowing the bourgeois Government and State.

Subsequently they become permanent as the organs of the State power of the masses through which the functions of Legislation and Administration are performed. It is with the latter that we are concerned at the moment.

P 1777, "How the Soviets Work" by H. N. Brailsford contains an account written in 1927 of the country. It is by no means an uncritical account, but it definitely shows how completely justified is our claim that the Soviet system even under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is the most democratic system of Government and administration which has been yet established anywhere. The account begins, correctly, with the factory. "The public life of Russia is based on two units—the factory and the village. In the factory grounds are located most of the centres of communal life from the public library to the technical classes which in Western lands are more usually established outside by

the Municipality. It is as workers of the factory that the citizens of Russia choose their Government Soviets by their votes." (Page II) Thus is abolished the territorial basis of so-called democracy under Capitalism, which by obscuring class cleavages renders its votes meaningless. In the factory itself it is made clear, the workers have a very large measure of control in dealing with disputes, wages, conditions, efficiency of work etc.

"The Works Council.....is an influential though not a ruling power in the productive work of the factory. Over the social institution of the factory it has full control."

The institutions are then described which deal with maternity, the care of infants and mothers, the education of children and of young workers, health measures, physical culture, adult education, the young workers' path to the university, the workers' theatre, etc. etc. all managed by the workers of the factory themselves. This is the unit on which the structure of Socialism is based.

He proceeds to describe the life of a village (page 44). Under the Soviet regime with its policy of collectivisation (this was before the days of the Five Year Plan and the policy of the intensive collectivisation), though the new policy has been only partially carried through, production of wheat had increased three-fold. The landlord had gone, and with him the oppression, both physical and intellectual, of the old order. The terror of service in the army had disappeared:

"The Red Army on the contrary is popular. To enter it means opportunity, promotion and education. Its term of service moreover, has been reduced to two years, and its numbers cut down by two-thirds." (page 49).

He describes a village Soviet, showing again how a genuinely democratic system has been established. "The Soviet...has two chief functions. It elects the members (in this case three) who sit on the more important Soviet of the parish. It also administers the social institutions of the village, the school, the club, and the rest. But all important matters are in practice referred by the Soviet to the village meeting, which every elector may attend...(the persons disfranchised in this village under the Soviet constitution

number only 9 out of 966 inhabitants, .. ..). A village which governs itself in this way by a meeting is realising the earliest and simplest conception of democracy. A peasant who talks with a foreign visitor about life seized the revolution is sure to say at some point in the conversation 'Now we are free' That is not the accepted view outside Russia. In the village as in the factory, one learns to understand it." (pages 50 and 51).

This is the state of things which the Prosecution describe as a ruthless dictatorship over the peasantry by the Red Army and the OGPU

The author passes on to the Soviet system in general. He admits that as regards the foundation of the system, the factory and the village, "it brings the rulers more closely and constantly in touch with the people than any other" (page 75)

In regard to the higher Soviet organs he is more critical. He states (page 72) "If they (the executive committees) in fact remain in touch with the mass of the people, they owe it less to the merits of the system than to the fact they are themselves elected members and men of the people, and that they belong by a majority to the Communist Party which has developed the study of the mass mind of the workers to a fine art. The unique and interesting thing about these executives is not the dubious and indirect method by which they have been chosen but rather the fact that men who have spent most of their lives as manual workers do contrive by hard study and incessant application, to direct a rather complicated machinery." He concludes his account "These (prices, industrialisation, illiteracy, educational facilities, sanitation, agriculture) are the problems of Soviet politics. With these at least every elector is encouraged to concern himself, with these the immense numbers of Russian citizens who pass every year for the first time through the constantly changing ranks of the Soviets are obliged to familiarise themselves. The process of education is incessant. For in one respect at least these Communists are unique amongst the dictators who have figured in history. Their passion is to educate those whom they rule." (page 78)

### **The Soviet Legal System**

He proceeds to discuss various departments of public life. The account of the legal system begins: "The Soviets started with the bold ambition of revolutionising the entire judicial system. They regarded the existing system as one of the chief defences of the propertied class, and they proposed that their own courts also should be the organs of the class struggle..... It is a fundamental principle of Soviet justice that all the three judges must be workers. It has thus reversed the practice of bourgeois States." (pages 85 and 86). The account concludes ".....much of the revolutionary impulse has survived. The procedure is more human, more expeditious, and less costly than of old. There are fewer appeals. And the old conception of punitive justice has vanished. The courts try to apply the rule that where the crime is one which the person is not likely to repeat, public censure may suffice in place of any penalty. For the habitual offender an attempt is made to turn the prisons which must restrain and isolate him, into institutions for his moral re-education. He is taught a trade or works at his own trade, and is credited on release with what remains of his Trade Union wage, after his family has been provided for. In some prisons a self-governing system has been adopted, and is said to work well." (page 87).

### **The Red Army**

The army is briefly dealt with. The social and cultural life of the soldiers, the equality of status between officers and men, the political education and discussion, the abolition of physical punishment for minor offences, the general education especially in the technique of agriculture, render the Red Army a unique institution, which could exist only under a genuinely popular regime. "The Red Army is, I believe, one of the undisputable successes of the revolution. It has won the affection of the masses". And it is a class army. "To carry arms", as a Military Manual puts it, "is the honourable privilege of the workers; they only may serve in it; the exploiters pay a tax of exemption ....." (page 91).



### **The Communal Problem**

The solution of the problem of conflicting nationalities within its territories is acknowledged to be one of the triumphs of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Rule. This book describes how the various peoples have been organised in their separate republics, with administrative autonomy, except that the army, foreign trade and communications, rank as common affairs for the whole Federation, and with complete cultural autonomy (page 95). It shows what the Dictatorship of the Proletariat means for the backward peoples of South Russia and Central Asia. "The first task in Tartary was to develop its language for modern uses. Its few scholars were set to work to translate text books of all kinds with a preference, I suspect, for politics. The library catalogue showed fifteen titles of Tartar books before the revolution but now shows 1,000. An official daily paper sprang into life and there was soon a weekly for the peasants, with four or five monthly periodicals.

The battering-ram of the new ideas beat mercilessly on the door of harem and mosque. The veil, save in a few remote villages has disappeared. In some of the mosques women are even seen among the worshippers. In all the schools the old conventions are defied by boys and girls who sit side by side in the most natural way at their lessons. Before the revolution no woman would have been there to teach, today they outnumber men students in the normal schools and even in the medical faculty. There are actual cases in which a woman has been chosen as president of a village soviet' (page 96).

The author sums up his account of this section with the words: "Russia is stinting herself, she lives dangerously and she lives poorly, but it is the ambition for a splendid future which gives her the courage to endure. Within a generation she will have brought, not the picked few, but the broad masses of these neglected Eastern races within the circle of civilisation" (pages 98 and 99).

Of Georgia and the races of the Caucasus, which have been the subject matter of so much anti-Bolshevik propaganda he writes (pages 101 and 102) "This confused corner of the earth with its

high mountains and deep valleys inhabited not only by Georgians, Armenians and Turko-Tartars, but also by Russians, German colonists and several lesser native races, was cursed up to its reunion under the Soviet, with endless local wars and internal feuds and massacres between Georgians and Armenians on the one hand and Christians and Moslems on the other. It now enjoys peace and harmony. The federal idea enables its little republics to reconcile autonomy with peace. Their cultural claims have been met to the full and the Soviets have actually done more for the Georgian language and resuscitation of its neglected literature than the former Nationalist Government. As for the Armenians, where Europe has talked, Russia has acted, and provided them with a national home in which a remnant of their persecuted race thrives and preserves its ancient culture. In Baku as in Kazan the Turko-Tartar race is creating its own promising civilisation. It is a creditable record."

So much for the "Red Imperialism" of the Soviet Union. The contrast with the policy of the Imperialist powers need not be pointed

### **The Soviet System Democratic**

The theory put forward by the Prosecution of the "Moscow clique" governing the whole country arbitrarily through the machinery of the Communist Party and the Soviets etc. receives no support even from so critical an observer as Mr. Brailsford. In his chapters on the Communist Party and the Dictatorship (pages 112 and 129 respectively) he shows the struggle which goes on within the Party against autocracy, and bureaucratic tendencies etc. He tells of the discussion within the Party on all matters of policy, and the discipline with which decisions are carried out by the minority in opposition to the accepted policy, as well as by the majority. "In short, the Party lives, for it continues to combine democracy with discipline" (page 128).

He tells of the function of "Pravda" (the central organ) as the "watch dog" against Party abuses, and of the factory newspapers and workers' and peasants' correspondents, who maintain a continual detailed criticism of the administration and its policy.

He mentions a leading Party member who spoke of the Party as the “mouthpiece” of the people “The fountain of power seems to spring from the factory and the village Nor is this a mere delusion For while the Party keeps the vital decisions in its own disciplined hands, it knows very well that it must contrive at its peril, to keep the factory and the village loyal and content On the administration side at least, this is much more nearly “Government of the people by people” than any other system which obtains in Europe ” (page 142)

### **Cultural Achievements**

A far more complete picture than this could be drawn even with the material at our disposal The account given by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, a critical observer (P 2492 of the Lower Court) will be found to agree substantially with that here summarised So also will that of Mr W J Brown, an ex-M P Secretary of the British Civil Servants’ Union (“Three Months in Russia”) The Prosecution have filed some collections of newspaper cuttings (P 442, P 443 and P 444), all from bourgeois papers, which also confirm it These articles some by Communists such as N K Krupskaya and A Rakovsky, some by outside observers such as Professor W T Goode, Miss A L Strong Mr W Wellock and ex M P etc which appeared in the nationalist press in India, are naturally concerned mainly with cultural achievements, the work essentially of the bourgeois democratic stage of revolution, which the proletarian revolution overtook and completed Such are the emancipation of women especially amongst the peasants and the backward nationalities of Central Asia, and the participation of women in all forms of activity including administration and Government, the solution of the national problem, health and sanitation, and education, especially the campaign for the ‘liquidation of illiteracy’ We have shown the remarkable achievements in some of these spheres A few more facts on important aspects of this work may be quoted “Health Work in Soviet Russia” (1928) by Anna J Haines, states (page 78) that as a result of the measures taken by the People’s Commissariat for the Protection of Health, the infant (first year) death rate for the whole

of Russia fell from 27 per cent in 1913 to 17 in 1923. For Moscow Province the figures are 27.6 per cent in pre-war days; that in 1923, 13.7 per cent. Leningrad 23 per cent and 12.9 per cent. The results of the campaign for the liquidation of illiteracy should also be given "The New Schools of New Russia" (1928) by Lucy L. W. Wilson, states (page 121): "The Commissariat for Education established an All Russia Extraordinary Commission for the elimination of illiteracy, determined, if possible, to conquer illiteracy among all the inhabitants of the Soviet Federation between 18 and 35 years of age, by the 10th Anniversary November 7, 1927. The 10th Anniversary has come and gone, awards have been made to teachers and to villages that have completely abolished illiteracy. The Red Army and the Trade Unions severally have been successful in liquidating it among their members, but rural illiteracy and illiteracy among the national minorities still exists. Nevertheless victory is in sight and the battle has been gallantly fought."

### **Economic Progress**

Such briefly are the achievements of the Soviet Union in the social and cultural spheres. We have now to come to the fundamental question of the establishment of Socialism, the *raison d'être* of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The reproach which critics brought against the Soviet Union after the launching of the New Economic Policy in 1921 and repeated by the Prosecution in this case in 1929, is that the Soviet Union has retreated from Socialism and is giving way to Capitalism. As we have said, this reproach has been disproved by the facts, especially after the beginning of the Five Year Plan in October 1928. But even before that date the available facts showed very clearly which way developments were proceeding. The Prosecution have no excuse for their ignorance.

As early as 1925 Trotsky was able to show, in his booklet "Towards Socialism or Capitalism" (P. 757) that the economy of the Soviet Union was becoming socialist. This is still more clearly to be seen two years later. "The Economic Organisation of the Soviet Union" by Scott Nearing and Jack Hardy discusses the

subject fairly fully and gives facts This book lays down three conditions for the transition to Socialism (page 221)

(1) 'The State power must be in the hands of the new order and wielded in the interest of the working-class and against the growth of the capitalist forces "

(2) "There must be large scale industrialism Socialism cannot be accomplished in a backward country It requires technique in accordance with the last word in science "

(3) 'The socialised forces of production, distribution and exchange must continually expand and those of private capital lose ground in the struggle

As for the first condition, it is fulfilled About that no critic has any doubt In regard to the second, the industrialisation of the country the following percentage figures of production are given

Year	1923 24	1924 25	1925 26	1926 27
Agriculture	100	108	128	134
Industry	100	145	203	230

These figures show that industrial production is growing much faster than agriculture The ratio between the two is as follows

(Industrial to total production)

Year	1923 24	1924 25	1925 26	1926 27
	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)
Ratio (%)	27 0	35 3	37 9	39 7

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The rate of growth of industry can be compared with the pre war rate of growth, which averaged 3 87 per cent per annum from 1900 to 1913 and 6 5 per cent per annum in the period 1908 to 1913 These figures enable it to be said that industry is growing rapidly and has already achieved a strong position The second condition for the development towards Socialism is fulfilled

In regard to the third condition laid down, viz the growth of socialised production etc at the expense of private capital, the

following figures are given for industrial production

Year	1923 24	1924 25	1925 26	1926 27
State and Co operative%	75 3	79 2	81 9	82 7
Private %	24 7	20 8	18 1	17 3

But these figures include not only large scale industry, but small handicraft production also. If this is eliminated the figures are

Year	1923 24	1924 25	1925 26	1926 27
State and Cooperative%	94 9	95 9	95 9	95 9
Private %	5 1	4 1	4 1	4 1

For wholesale trade the figures are

Year	1923 24	1924 25	1925 26	1926 27
State and Cooperative%	78 2	90 5	90 6	91
Private %	21 8	9 5	9 4	9

For retail trade

Year	1923 24	1924 25	1925 26	1926 27
State and Cooperative%	41 4	55 7	61 2	64 5
Private %	58 6	44 3	38 8	35 5

Foreign Trade, Transport and Finance are State monopolies and it is stated that concessions etc. in the sphere of foreign trade amount to less than 3 per cent of the total turnover.

In regard to the third condition therefore, agriculture is the only sphere in which the forces of Socialism were not making progress at the expense of private capital. At that time the proportion of agricultural production on State and cooperative farms was at a low level and was declining slightly (from 13.9 per cent in 1923-24 to 12.3 per cent in 1926-27).

### **Workers' Conditions**

That this progress is not merely forced on by the State in a bureaucratic manner at the expense of the workers and without their cooperation, which would certainly not constitute progress towards Socialism, is also shown by the facts. We have given some citations already on the democracy which prevails in the factory. The workers share in the increasing production of industry is

shown by Messrs Nearing and Hardy (pages 159 onwards). They state that between October, 1922 and November, 1926 while the productivity of labour increased 203.9 per cent, wages rose 242.2 per cent. The eight-hour day (seven for night work) is established by law as the standard. (As is well known the standard day was reduced to seven hours in November, 1927). Overtime work is practically not allowed. If allowed it is paid at higher rates. Annual vacations of at least 2 weeks with full pay are given, for some dangerous or unpleasant occupations four weeks. Equal pay for the same work for both the sexes is the rule. Maternity is especially protected. The working mother has two months' leave before and two months' after delivery, with full pay and a sum of money on the birth of a child. Special care is also taken of the children of the working women.

- There are special provisions for young workers, limiting the age in general to 16 before which work must not begin, and enjoying part-time education for the first years of work. Labour protection, social insurance, etc., are highly developed and are managed by the workers' unions.

Messrs Nearing and Hardy give many more such facts which are fully confirmed by the earlier and more complete report of the British Trade Union Congress Delegation to Russia (1924) by Mr. W. J. Brown, by other volumes in the "Vanguard Series" and by many other observers.

In 1927 the claim could therefore undoubtedly be justified, that in the sphere of industry at least the Soviet Union was progressing rapidly towards Socialism.

### **The Five Years' Plan**

But later developments have been far more rapid and striking. "The Five Years' Plan" of economic development, which involved a rate of industrialisation even greater than that of the previous years, entirely under State control, and in addition a big development in the direction of collectivisation and socialisation of agriculture, was launched in October, 1928. The Plan figures for the whole period, and results for the first year (1928-29) and part

of the second, are given in the "Soviet Union Year Book" for 1930. This is an official publication designed primarily for the use of foreign firms trading with the Soviet Union. The information is therefore accurate.

### **Industrialisation**

On pages 93 and 94 it gives a table of industrial production from 1913 onwards. This shows how production fell steadily from 1916 during the period of civil war, until it reached in 1920, the height of the intervention, 20.4 per cent of the level of 1913. From that time it rose steadily to 117.4 per cent of the 1913 level in the year 1927-28. At the end of that year the Five Year Plan began. It was estimated that in 1928-29 industrial production would increase by 10.8 per cent to 130.1 per cent of the level of 1913. Actually it exceeded the Plan figures and rose to 137.2 per cent of 1913. On this basis the revised estimate for 1929-30 instead of 153.7 per cent is 172.6 per cent of the 1913 level. The Plan as originally laid down aimed at increasing industrial production by 1932-33 to 265.7 per cent of pre-war production, at a regular rate of expansion of about 20 per cent per annum for the five years. Even this tremendous rate of increase as the figures above quoted show has been exceeded in the first year.

Two further items may be added. It is pointed out (pages 98 and 99) that this increase in production is not taking place at the cost of capital. On the contrary the basic capital of the country is increasing year by year. A table is given showing depreciation and new investment, the latter far exceeding the former, and a steady growth from 60,000 million roubles at the beginning of 1925-26 to 74,000 millions at the beginning of 1929-30, and an estimated value of 85,000 millions at the beginning of 1930-31.

### **Heavy Industry**

The second is that the heavy industry—the manufacture of the means of production—which is obviously essential for a self-contained Socialist economy, is being developed very rapidly. It is stated on pages 95 and 96



"The greatest development is planned for the iron and steel industries, which were most seriously damaged during the period of civil war.....It is expected to increase the output of pig iron from 3.3 million tons in 1927-28 to 10 million tons per year by the end of the five-year period, and the output of open-hearth steel from 4.2 million to 10.4 million tons. The developments in this field are undoubtedly among the greatest which have ever taken place in any country.

"Corresponding activity is planned in the machine-building industry.....

"An almost entirely new chemical industry will be created....." The tables of production figures on pages 100 and 101 show that the facts up to the present bear out the predictions.

Practically all of this increase is of course State-owned industry. The figures on page 127 confirm those of Messrs. Nearing and Hardy, and show that the predominance of State-owned industry continues to increase. In 1928-29 the production of State and cooperative industry was 89 per cent of the total, small handicraft 9 per cent and private capitalist 2 per cent.

Wages continue to increase and other conditions to improve. Figures are given on page 453 of annual average wages as follows:

Years	Roubles
1922-23	180
1923-24	355
1924-25	521
1925-26	648
1926-27	726
1927-28	790
1928-29	892

According to the figures on page 97, if these are corrected for the cost of living so as to represent real wages, the figure in 1927-28 is 132.7 per cent of 1913 and that of 1928-29 is 138.6 per cent. In 1932-33 it is estimated that real wages will be 209 per cent of the pre-war level.

The conclusion to be drawn from these facts is a confirmation of the previous result that in regard to industry, progress is undoubtedly towards Socialism.

### **Agriculture**

But under the Five Year Plan the socialisation of agriculture is also being conducted.

According to the figures in the Soviet Union Year Book 1930 (pages 92 and 93) the total agricultural production, after declining in 1921-22 to 55 per cent of the 1913 level, rose just above that level by 1925-26, and since then has increased steadily but slowly. The Five Year Plan proposes to carry through two main measures of improvement:—

- (1) Socialisation, the transfer of agriculture from individualised small scale to State or cooperative large scale production.
- (2) The introduction of modern methods, the increased use of machinery and fertilisers and the improvement of management.

The later steps can be carried out on a significant scale only if farming is first socialised.

It is stated in regard to the former, that by March, 1930, more than 40 per cent of all the peasant holdings had been collectivised, and it is estimated that by the end of the five years practically the whole of the cultivated area will be under State farmers. (Page 93). In regard to the second matter it is expected that in the same period the yield per acre will have increased 35 per cent owing to the improved methods adopted. The Plan contemplates an increase of agricultural production by about 10 per cent per annum, resulting in a crop in 1932-33 of 159 per cent of the pre-war level.

Beginnings are now being made therefore in agriculture also for the transition to Socialism.

### **The Soviet Union a Socialist State**

The facts here cited entitle us to claim with complete confidence that the Soviet Union is transforming itself

successfully and quickly into a Socialist State. It is the first positive product of the period of the collapse of Capitalism, the first successful effort to break through into the new period which lies ahead for mankind, after it has swept away the present chaos of oppression, exploitation and misery.

We need offer no apology for dwelling at some length upon the achievements of the Soviet Union. The history of the modern world apart from the Soviet Union would be sufficient support for the Marxian outlook and analysis. But supplemented by this concrete case of the success of the Marxian-Leninist policy carried through a whole stage further than anywhere else, well on to the high road towards Socialism, our conviction of the correctness of Marxism and Leninism as an analysis of the world situation in the present period, and as a policy for dealing with it, is confirmed.

### **The Communist International and the Soviet Union**

One further question must be dealt with in connection with the Soviet Union. The Prosecution have repeatedly stated their belief that the Soviet Union was 'at the bottom' of the whole revolutionary movement which they are opposing. They attribute the foundation and existence of the Communist International itself to the Russian Revolution, which, as we shall show, is a perversion of the facts. They have not hesitated to accuse the Soviet Government of Imperialistic designs upon other countries including India, and of "plotting" to substitute the "Government of Mr. Stalin" for the "Government of His Majesty King George." The complainant later stated that he "did not charge the Government of Russia with plotting to overthrow the Government of His Majesty", but "he agreed generally with Mr. Langford James' statement (opening speech, page 4) that the Government of Russia and the Communist International have exactly the same objective, exactly the same set plan of action and are dominated by exactly the same set of people." And "in so far as the Soviet Government of Russia is a Government by the Communist Party of Russia and therefore bound by the decrees of the Comintern it is pledged to overthrow the sovereignty of His Majesty."

The Magistrate makes an even more straightforward charge (Committal Order, page 47): "the reason for this insistence (by the Russian Communists) on the necessity for a world revolution is not far to seek. It is mainly a measure of self-preservation."

In the face of this the Magistrate then charges us, the accused with assuming that the Communist International and the Government of the U.S.S.R. are the same thing. (Page 50)

We must state that so far as we have put forward any plea of this sort it was with quite another motive from that which the Magistrate alleges. We considered that the action of the Prosecution in charging the Government of the U.S.S.R. with fomenting revolution in India was a dangerous thing, and intended to assist in the preparation of war against the Soviet Union. We therefore tried by taking up this point to expose its error and to force the Prosecution to change their line of propaganda.

### **So-called "Red Imperialism"**

But that is not sufficient. By many statements, such as those quoted, the Prosecution have sought to accuse the U.S.S.R. of "Red Imperialism" and a desire to extend its territories by a conquest by "fomenting revolution" over the rest of the earth.

Nobody denies that the policy of the Communist International is to assist the revolutionary movement in all parts of the world against Capitalism and Imperialism, and when the revolution is victorious in other countries to bring about a free Federation of these Soviet Republics which will extend eventually all over the earth. Nobody denies further that the U.S.S.R. and its achievements in the construction of Socialism are a powerful attractive force for oppressed classes and peoples, showing them the way to achieve freedom and what freedom means.

But this is not to say that the policy of the U.S.S.R. is to attack other Governments or to attempt to extend its territories either by open or by underground means. This is proved by the repeated declarations of the official representatives of the Soviet Government, and by its actions in connection with the countries which border its territories.

We may cite the interview between Professor Jerome Davis, of Yale University and Mr. A. N. Mikoyan, Peoples' Commissar for Foreign and Domestic Trade, given in "Soviet Russia and her Neighbours" by R. P. Arnot, pages XIV-XX, and the account given in the same volume on pages 29-30 of the diplomatic history of the question of the Communist International and the Soviet Government. Here it is made clear that the Soviet Government in no way assists in the work of the Communist International, though it cannot for obvious reasons interfere with that work.

If the Soviet Government were really trying to promote revolution and extend its territories, it would be supposed that in certain suitable cases that Government would have taken steps by military conquest to extend its sway, and its policy would inevitably have led to war with other states. It would further naturally increase its armaments and military power to the utmost in readiness for opportunities. Neither of these things has it done. Arnot points out (pages 36-37): "The Soviet people have a positive and unusual interest in continued peace.... ..this interest of the peasantry in peace has been expressed time and again by the Soviet Government. I do not mean merely passionate declarations in favour of peace—in which the statement of every country are virtuous—but the practical application of these sentiments. By the end of 1923 the Red Army, which was demobilised in 1921-22 in spite of the risk involved, was reduced from over five millions to under six lakhs—less than half the standard that was considered necessary by the Czars. This actual disarmament has been accompanied by definite proposals for disarmament at every conference or negotiation of any magnitude since the end of the civil war... ..".

The later proposals of Mr. Litvinov on behalf of the Soviet delegation to the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1927 are well known. He there gave a completely worked-out plan for international disarmament, which would be total and absolute. He later submitted proposals for extensive but partial real disarmament. Both proposals were of course rejected. (P. 2491, 6th September, 1928)

**The Soviet Union and the Czarist Colonies**

Further if the Soviet Government were really out to appropriate territory without regard to the wishes of the inhabitants, it would be supposed that it would have done so at the expense of the numerous weak and semi-colonial countries on its borders. Its policy towards these States however has been just the reverse, and a marked contrast to the policy of the Imperialist powers, which always get these countries under their influence by financial obligations and entangling treaties.

With Afghanistan the Soviet Government entered into diplomatic relations in 1919, on its declaration of Independence, and ambassadors were exchanged. In 1926 an equal and reciprocal treaty was signed between the Governments embodying the principles of mutual equality and non-aggression etc. (Arnot, pages 121-123). This was a complete break with the policy pursued by Czarism and still pursued by Great Britain, to get Afghanistan under control, if necessary by promoting revolutions, for use as a buffer State one against the other.

With Persia, which had been divided into "spheres of influence" between Britain and Czarist Russia, the Soviet Government entered into a treaty in 1920, which (1) revoked all treaties etc. either imposed on Persia by the Czarism or containing provisions detrimental to Persia; (2) cancelled all the debts of Persia to the Czarist Government; and (3) laid down the principle of mutual non-interference. In this way Persia was able to become an independent State. Since then British Imperialism has done its best to gain control over Persia, and has succeeded to a considerable extent. (Arnot, pages 123-125)

Similarly in relation to China, which had been oppressed, exploited and partitioned by the Czarist Government in common with the other Imperialist powers, the Soviet Government gave up without compensation all the Czarist claims on Chinese territory and renounced the Russian share of the "Boxer Indemnity." Moreover by exchanging ambassadors the Soviet Government recognised the independent and equal status of the Chinese Republic which no other power would do. (Arnot, page 133)

The Soviet power, therefore, though it has had plenty of opportunities to practise Imperialist aggression and conquest, has rigorously abstained from doing so, even from maintaining the financial and legal claims which would have given a convenient pretext for doing these things, in a manner which the Imperialist powers could not openly have objected to. On the contrary it has shown not only in words but in deeds its belief in the doctrine of self-determination and its care for the integrity and independence of small and backward nationalities.

After this to accuse the Soviet Government of wishing to extend its domains by armed force or otherwise is ridiculous.

### **The coming war against the Soviet Union**

We have said that we regard it as our duty to defend the Soviet Union as the socialist fatherland of the working-class against all attacks and dangers. The Soviet Union has been subjected to a violent attack in this Court, to which we have tried to make a reply. But the attack on the Soviet Union extends beyond this Court room. In our propaganda and discussions we have often mentioned the danger of war against the Soviet Union by the Capitalist powers, especially Great Britain. Even while doing its part in the ideological preparation of this war, the Prosecution have ridiculed our fears and counter-preparations. The Magistrate as usual chimes in in unison with the Prosecution: ".....the war of Imperialists against Russia (which is so confidently anticipated in all Communist literature that it would be heresy to doubt the reality of their apprehensions)."

Our apprehensions of a Capitalist war against the Soviet Union are real, and we shall show that they are not only real but reasonable. But first let it be shown that we are not alone in entertaining these fears.

The Report of the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress in 1927 said: "The raid on the premises of Arcos Ltd. and the subsequent breaking off of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Russia tend greatly to disturb the international situation, and have created considerable apprehension in the

minds of the Russian people as to the dangers of aggression against the Soviet State." (Report page 80)

And the President in his address referred to the matter: "..... whatever happens, the conquests of the Russian workers must be defended and maintained." (Report page 70)

Similarly Diwan Chaman Lal, ex-M.L.A., said in his presidential address to the Cawnpore Session of the A.I.T.U.C. (November 1927) P. 1381 page 36: "The dangers of war with Russian are not entirely unreal. They have been voiced on more occasions than one by the Commander-in-Chief".

P. 444 contains a reprint of an article from the well-known Liberal Journal of New York "The New Republic" of some date in 1927 entitled "England's Attempt at Anti-Bolshevik Bloc" and P. 442 contains a reprint of an article by Mr. Sisley Huddleston, the Paris correspondent of the London 'Times', and the 'New Statesman', called "The Riddle of Russia", also of 1927. Both these articles give particulars of the political preparations and diplomatic manoeuvres then going on among the Western Capitalist powers in preparation for war against the Soviet Union.

Finally, as Diwan Chaman Lal has reminded us, the Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's forces in India has several times recently spoken in a most threatening manner of the coming war with "a great power to the north." Of course for the benefit of his hearers in India he has made it appear that the offensive would come from the North. But we need not be deceived by this.

It seems therefore, that we are not the only victims of this illusion about the war against the Soviet Union, over which the Prosecution and the Magistrate are so scathing.

### **Imperialism versus U.S.S.R.**

The Imperialist powers have three main reasons for their hostility towards the Soviet Union. Their very natural fear and dislike of a proletarian Socialist State, which moreover has such a disturbing effect upon the subject peoples and oppressed classes of their empires; their desire to recover the equivalent of their very large investments and loans to pre-revolutionary Russia, which the



Soviet Government has of course repudiated; and their desire, which increases in strength as the crisis of Capitalism grows more profound, to exploit the territories and population of the U.S.S.R. as a market and colony.

P. 48 (Labour International Hand Book 1921) contains an interesting item of information in this connection (page 69): (recounting of the 1905 revolution) "The dependence of the Czar for his revenue upon the Duma made the prospect of a constitutional Government seem a possibility. Whether or not this was a mirage is difficult to tell. What actually happened was that before the Duma met in the spring, of 1906, the British Foreign Office approved the floatation on the London Stock Exchange of a gigantic Russian loan and so enabled the Czar to snap his fingers at the Duma. This was the first occasion on which the Stock Exchange had handled Czarist bonds.....the money thus acquired was used to reestablish the shaken autocracy and to crush the constitutional as well as the revolutionary movement. An era of repression set in. Not at any time during the Czardom was there such savage and violent terrorism....."

Thus the counter-revolutionary activities of the British bourgeoisie began in Russia as early as 1906.

The sums either lent to the Czarist Government or invested in Russia by the foreign powers were considerable. P. 1176 ("Illustrated History of the Russian Revolution") states (page 7): "At the end of the nineteenth century it is estimated that a sum of 600 million roubles was invested in Russia from abroad." And on page 70 a summary is given of the position at the end of the war, when foreign capital controlled three-fourths of the Russian banking system, and had very big holdings in most of the industries, coal, oil, etc. Most of this foreign capital was French and Belgian. British capital was invested mainly in oil and copper. This is the main reason, it stated, why Russia entered the war at all.

### **The Intervention of 1918-21**

In connection with the possibility of war on the Soviet Union, it should never be forgotten that for some years after the

establishment of the Soviet Government, the Governments of Great Britain, Germany, France, Poland, the U.S.A. and Japan did wage war against the Soviet Union, both directly and through subsidised agents. Professor Laski says (P. 1782 page 43): "..... subsidised a series of dubious adventures, prepared for a consideration to attempt its overthrow" (i.e. that of the Soviet Government).

R. P. Arnot in "Soviet Russia and her Neighbours" gives some account of these wars of intervention. As early as May, 1918 Allied promises brought about a revolt of a large number of Czechoslovak prisoners of war in Russia. In June, 1918, a British force landed at Murmansk "ostensibly to prevent the Murmansk coast from being used by the Germans and the White Finns as a base for submarines. But it soon became plain that the British authorities were hostile to the local Soviets. Archangel was presently occupied, the Bolsheviks expelled, and an anti-Bolshevik Government set up and maintained by British bayonets. In the forces that held Archangel were American, Siberian, French and British soldiers, with the latter predominant." (pages 15 and 16)

Next comes the intervention of the American and Japanese forces in Siberia. "Under the protection of the Siberian Allied forces (77000 Japanese troops and 7000 American), the Soviets were dispersed, Bolshevik Government or bodies overthrown and others set up in their place. ....as the occupation advanced these anti-Soviet parties were extinguished one by one, and in their place there appeared open partisans of the Czardom. The most notorious was Admiral Koltchak. He gathered his forces composed of monarchist Russians, a stiffening of Allied troops in which the British predominated ..... ." (page 17). "In the meantime, throughout the spring and summer of 1918, the Germans had been making similar attacks on the territory of Soviet Russia. They had occupied the Ukrain, and had advanced beyond Ukrainian territory into the territory of Soviet Russia down to wards the Caucasus. At the same time they equipped and maintained a section of Czarist Russians who were to operate

against the Russians. This Germanophile section of the Czarist Russians maintained friendly relations with the Ententeophile section which relied on the support of the Allies, advancing from the south into the Caspian. Thus in the spring and summer of 1918 Russia was being ringed round with enemies and there seemed to be a tacit agreement between the two great world coalitions then locked in warfare that Soviet Russia was a neutral power that could not be allowed to survive." (page 18) Further on page 20: "..... The German staffs in Kiev and Minsk prepared three monarchist armies: (1) The North Russian Army, afterwards transformed into the army of Yudenitch; (2) the South Russian Army; (3) the Astrakhan Army." The Soviet Government of course remonstrated against this scandalous conduct on the part of powers which at that very time were professing to be fighting for "self-determination." "On October 24, the Peoples' Commissar for Foreign Affairs sent to President Wilson a note in which he took up the use of American soldiers and munitions against the Soviet Government for the preceding months and made comparison of the intervention with the views expressed by President Wilson in the Fourteen Points of January 18. ... ..". "The note to President Wilson met with no response." (pages 22-23)

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Further, "On November 7, 1918, the 6th Congress of the Soviets made a solemn offer to the Entente powers to begin peace negotiations. No reply was received to these communications. In the next 12 months that offer was repeated ten times, but did not appear on any occasion to have any effect."

But the activities of the Entente powers were not confined to making open or covert war upon Soviet Russia. They actually organised "plots" and "conspiracies" for the overthrow of the Soviet Government. Price writes in "My reminiscences of the Russian Revolution," (D.585) pages 331 and 332:

"In the last week of August (1918) the 'Izvestia' published the Lockhart disclosures. The Extraordinary Commission for the fight with the Counter-Revolution had obtained evidence of a plot

against the Republic in which the British agent Lockhart was involved (This evidence was subsequently corroborated by the witnesses before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal on November 28 1918, at the trial of Lockhart's accomplices, at which the writer was present ) According to this evidence Lockhart had invited to his room an officer of the Lettish Regiment of the Moscow garrison and paid him a large sum of money to depose the Soviet authority in Moscow and arrest the Council of the Peoples Commissars In return for this Lockhart had hinted, without definitely pledging himself, that the Allies would recognise the independence of the Baltic States A few days later came the publication of Rene Marchand's letter to President Poincare, which has since been issued as a pamphlet In this the former correspondent of the Figaro describes being present in the first week of August at a meeting at the American Consulate in which French and British diplomatic representatives also took part and in which certain agents of the consulate of these countries in Moscow discussed plans for blowing up the railway bridges over the Volova river an act which would have condemned the whole of the population of Petrograd to death from starvation " But worse was to follow Arnot states (page 23) it was only with the coming of the Armistice on November 11 that the war on Soviet Russia began to develop in earnest '

It is impossible here to follow the complicated history of the intervention campaigns of 1919 and 1920 It is sufficient to give one final citation Arnot writes of the 1920 campaigns (page 53) —

"Very extensive preparations had been made for a spring offensive This offensive began in April It covered (1) a Polish-Ukrainian combination (Pilsudski and Petlura) in the West and South-West,

(2) the remains of Denikin's forces under General Wrangel in the South supported by Allied warships and equipped with ammunition from the Allies, and

(3) A Japanese offensive in Eastern Siberia

On April 4 the Japanese seized Vladivostok and began offensive operations with continual reinforcements. On April 24, the Polish-Ukrainian attack was launched on a 250-mile front and reached Kiev, the old capital of Ukraine on May 8. A telegram of congratulation "on the occasion of the chief national holiday in Poland" was sent by King George V to Marshal Pilsudski on May 3. Allied complicity was at first denied, but afterwards admitted by degrees. On May 11 Mr Churchill admitted that the British and French Governments had "helped to strengthen and equip the Polish Army." Finally the discovery in the London docks of munitions actually in process of despatch to Poland and the refusal of the dockers to handle them led to the admission that these munitions had been given free to Poland by the British Government as far back as October "

This crisis was concluded eventually by an armistice in October 1920, and in March 1921, a British-Russian Trade Agreement was signed (pages 58-59). An interesting item of information relating to this period is provided by P 48 (Labour International Hand Book), page 37 footnote.

One of the difficulties in the conclusion of the agreement was the British Government's insistence that the Soviet Government was in a position to prevent the revolutionary propaganda of the Communist International in Britain and that it must do so as a preliminary to trade. In March 1921 it was discovered that the British Government had been fostering counter-revolutionary propaganda in Russia and that the British Police had actually been responsible for a forged edition of "Pravda" (the central organ of the Communist Party of Russia), which was to be distributed in Russia with a view to causing risings against the Soviet authority "

### **Collapse of Intervention**

This intervention eventually ceased for two main reasons. The forces which the Allies and the Central powers were supporting and subsidising were of poor quality and morale, and in spite of superior equipment etc., (provided by the foreign powers) they could not prevail permanently against the revolutionary

enthusiasm of the Red Army. Consequently successful intervention would have meant still greater expenditure and the despatch of large foreign forces, which the condition of general exhaustion of economic resources and of the personnel of the armies at that time prohibited. Further the Labour Movement in the Allied countries was revolting against the intervention. P. 48 states on pages 86 and 87 that the threatened strike of the Triple Alliance (i.e. the three big unions, the National Union of Railwaymen, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain and the Transport Workers' Federation) and the actual occurrence of a partial international strike of protest in some countries, were instrumental in inducing the War Office to withdraw the troops from Archangel, and later that a direct intervention by Britain and France in the Polish-Russian War was prevented only by the threat of a general strike and the formation of Councils of Action.

### **The Cost of Intervention**

When the foreign support was withdrawn the counter-revolutionary armies or what was left of them collapsed at once. But for the foreign support the civil war would hardly have lasted months. Actually the various campaigns lasted from May, 1918 to early in 1921. [The Japanese however did not leave Vladivostok until November 1922 (Arnot, page 102), and did not evacuate the northern part of Saghalien Island until May, 1925 (page 103)]. The damage caused by these campaigns on 22 fronts lasting for well over two years, and covering at one time or another almost all the territory of the U.S.S.R. was enormous, and the suffering to the population and the setback to economic reconstruction of immense magnitude. The Soviet Union Year Book, 1930, states on page 68, "The losses in industry owing to intervention and blockade were calculated by the Genoa conference to reach a general total of 9,212 million pre-war roubles."

The Soviet Government has officially estimated its total losses due to intervention at £ 5,000 millions (Arnot, page 76). As we have stated previously, the total killed on the Soviet side in these wars is estimated at 13,50,000.

The complicity of the Allied Governments including the British, is not now denied. It has been stated authoritatively that the whole campaign cost the British treasury £ 100 millions (See Labour Research Department "Labour White Paper" Number 4)

### **Renewed Preparations**

It is commonly assumed that because the intervention ceased and in some cases trade agreements and even formal "recognition" by the Imperialist Governments were granted to the Soviet Government the danger of further conflict is past. This is a complete misconception. The causes of hostility are permanent. The circumstances which caused the cessation of the intervention were temporary and have to a large extent disappeared. The exhaustion and "war weariness" of 1920-21 have gone almost entirely. And the active opposition of the working-class to anti-Soviet policies has decreased with such events as the breaking up of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee in 1926 and the permanent and bitter hostility between the revolutionary Labour Movement and the reformists. The British Labour Movement, from 8 to 9 million organised workers, with their militant enthusiasm—Councils of Action, Triple Alliance, threat of the general strike etc.—and Mr Snowden and Mr MacDonald talking of the revolution, has slumped to about 5 million members while its leaders say "never again" to the general strike, enter into negotiations with Lord Melchett and carry on His Majesty's Government. The complete collapse of the Labour leadership of Great Britain (the same thing has occurred perhaps in a less dramatic way in other countries) is an enormous help to Imperialism in its anti-Soviet activities.

The permanent danger of war between British Imperialism and the Soviet Union is shown by the history of the official relations of the two Governments—(1) The ultimatum delivered in May 1923 by Lord Curzon, which very nearly precipitated war. It was avoided only by the extreme moderation and desire for peace of the Soviet Union, and the difficult European situation (the invasion of the Ruhr Valley by the French troops) (Amot,

page 92); (2) The breaking off of the treaty negotiations in 1924 in connection primarily with the "Zinovieff Letter" incident (Arnot, page 78); (3) The raid on the premises of Arcos Ltd. and the breaking off of diplomatic relations in 1927. These actions are those of the dominant section. Imperialist finance capital, of the British bourgeoisie, represented by the Conservative Party. At other times when conditions are not favourable, another side of British Capitalist Policy has come to the front, which is concerned to trade with Soviet Russia. The Labour Party has usually voiced the views of that section, but it is not certain that it will continue to do so. The Labour Party is so subservient to Capitalism, that it may take up either policy, as Capitalism orders it.

We may refer to minor indications of the attitude of British Imperialism. Such is the campaign conducted in Britain against the so-called anti-religious activities of the Soviet Government, which has become very intense in the last few months, and has been assisted by prominent statesmen (generally the continuous propaganda against the Soviet Union which is led personally by the most prominent statesmen in the country on all subjects, is done in a manner and to a extent which would be considered the gravest breach of diplomatic propriety if directed against any other Government). We can refer also to such a piece of provocation as the British Air Force manoeuvres in 1927, which took the form of a rehearsal of a bombing raid on Leningrad (P. 442). Other Imperialist powers behave in the same insulting manner. There is continual friction over trade relations. The Government of the U.S.A. has recently prohibited certain types of exports to the Soviet Union on the ground that they are potential war material; the French Government has put an embargo on the entry of Soviet ships into French ports. The latest case is the outcry over the so-called "dumping" of Russian wheat on the world market. "Dumping" is a legitimate commercial method when practised by a capitalist concern. In any case the ridiculous nature of the protest is shown by the Soviet Government's pointing out that its exports of wheat total 2 per cent of the world exports of wheat. Many other incidents and circumstances of a more serious character can be cited to show the existence of a permanent state



of hostility between the capitalist powers and the Soviet Union, and more, the existence of definite preparations and plans for war against the Soviet Union, which may at any suitable time develop into actual war

Incidents of a deliberately provocative character are such as these the murder of V V Vorovsky (Soviet Ambassador at Rome) at Geneva during the Geneva Conference in 1923 (Arnot, page 27), the murder of M Voikoff in Warsaw in 1927, the raid on the Soviet Legation at Peking and the murder of a number of Soviet citizens in China in 1927-28, obviously with the connivance of the Imperialist powers, the seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railway from Soviet control by the Chinese bourgeois Government in alliance with British and American Imperialism in 1929

The widespread plan promoted chiefly by Great Britain of encirclement of the U S S R by a ring of heavily armed hostile states is well known (Arnot, pages 115-118) shows how the border states refused to agree to a Soviet proposal for mutual disarmament in 1922-23, and how by Fascist *coups d'etat* in Poland and Lithuania obviously promoted by the Western powers, the possibilities of an anti-Russian bloc among the Western European countries were reinforced"

He also stresses the permanent hostility of the Rumanian landlords' Government which is in possession of a large slice of Ukrainian territory Bessarabia to the Soviet Union He further gives instructive table of the armies in these border states (Arnot page 116) The facts brought out by him are that the Soviet Union army was reduced in 1923 to 6,10,000 men and is at present considerably less than half the strength of the pre-war Czarist period, while the six border states with a total population of 51 millions (as opposed to the 130 millions of the Soviet Union) have armies totalling at the lowest 6,42,500 and possibly, according to equally reliable statements, 7,84,100 It is well known that these armies, especially those of Poland and Rumania, are in close relations with the British and French armies, and high officers of these Western powers take part in their manoeuvres etc That this anti-Soviet Bloc is still alive may be shown by the recent ceremonial visits of British and French fleets to a Rumanian naval port on the Black Sea

The chief obstacle to the successful establishment of this bloc has always been the German bourgeoisie. The British have tried to draw Germany into a "western orientation" against the Soviet Union and seemed to have done so at Locarno "Locarno was celebrated as the dawn of a new peaceful epoch, but for Soviet Russia it seemed the building up of a new hostile bloc—as indeed it was proclaimed to be by one British Minister" (Arnot, page III). The alliance formed at the Locarno Conference soon broke up because of the antagonism between the French and the German bourgeoisie, thus checking the British plans for a time (page 113). Efforts were renewed, however, especially by Lord Birkenhead's visit to Berlin in 1928, after which he openly admitted that he had urged "in private conversation" that Germany should join with Britain and France against Soviet Russia (P 249) 15-1-29)

We must add to these facts the activities especially of British Imperialism in the near East—the attempts to get effective control on Persia—the encouragement of the successful revolution against pro-Soviet Amanullah in Afghanistan—and the increase of armaments especially of the air force, and the building of strategic roads etc. in Iraq and the North-West Frontier Province of India (P 1220). Both Iraq and N W P as has often been pointed out, are within easy air raiding distance of the important Soviet industrial centres Baku and Tiflis. The huge expenditure on armaments in India has already been commented on. The facts given by the Simon Commission Report put India in regard to armaments expenditure seventh in the list of world powers, and almost on a level with such militarist nations as Japan and Italy. The needs of defence from any possible attack across the Frontier are clearly insufficient to explain this. The real reasons are (1) international defence against revolution and (2) preparation for offensive war.

It will be seen that from whatever side the matter is approached, it becomes clear that events are leading towards war by or on behalf of the leading Imperialist powers against the Soviet Union. This is no baseless apprehension on our part but a serious fact.

It may be asked, how can British Imperialism pursue the policy alleged here and in a previous section, of preparing war against both the U S S R and the U S A simultaneously? It is a fact

that both these preparations are taking place That cannot be denied The answer then is that British Imperialism is impelled in both these directions at the same time by forces beyond its control It must be prepared for both eventualities for while the preparations, military and diplomatic, are deliberate, the underlying causes, which arise from the nature of Capitalist power, are incapable of being controlled by Capitalism itself, the actual outbreak of war on the other hand, may not be prepared in detail, and perhaps cannot be foreseen The possibility is to be recognised that the hostile preparations of the British and American and other Imperialist powers may at any time be suspended outwardly and temporarily and a united front established against the U S S R A naval "Disarmament" treaty would form part of such a transaction

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#### IV THE NATIONAL REVOLUTION

It is no doubt with intention that the Prosecution have used all its unexampled powers of misrepresentation in dealing with the question of the national revolution and our attitude towards nationalism Their propaganda for obvious political reasons has been directed to divide and isolate us as far as possible from the militant nationalist movement On the other hand the question is one which has naturally concerned us continually as our most difficult and constant tactical problem and we have been at pains frequently to state our views There is, therefore the less excuse for the Prosecution's distortions We consider it necessary to give finally and definitely our analysis of the situation and the reasons which have determined our policy, with as precise a statement as possible within a short space of that policy in all its more important aspects

#### **British Imperialism in India**

The relationship of India to Great Britain, or the British Empire, is essentially an economic one Constitutional relations including the sovereignty of the King are forms The rule of British capital over India is the reality

Historically this relation has developed through different stages, corresponding to the development of British Capitalism. British capital acquired influence in India during the period of the so-called "Mercantile Imperialism", when the principal means of profit was through the operation of merchant capital. It is notorious that at this period and up to the end of the 18th century, by which time the political control of the East India Company had been established in India, the activity of the British was one of almost undisguised robbery (See for example Lajpat Rai's "Unhappy India", Chap. 24). Subsequent to this, roughly during the whole 19th century, the principal means of exploitation was through the operation of industrial capital, i.e. through the sale in India of British manufactured goods and the use by British manufacturers of materials obtained cheaply from India. Again the measures taken to safeguard the market, such as the physical destruction of the Indian handicraft industries which competed with the British, the enforced free trade for British goods, except the means of production, etc., are well-known. The third phase, roughly the 20th century, is distinguished by the growing importance of Finance-Capital. British capital is invested in India either in industry, or in plantations, mines, etc., or as Government or other loans, and profit is taken either as industrial profit, salaries, commissions, etc., or as interest drawn mainly from the peasantry through taxation.

### **The Exploitation of India**

In the present period these three forms of exploitation go on together. The value of the exploitation of India to the British bourgeoisie has always been great. Digby ("Prosperous British India," page 30) attributes the rapid growth of British Industry in the latter half of the 18th century principally to this wealth, which he states in the period from Plassey to Waterloo (1757 to 1814) amounted to £ 1,000 millions. This is not an unorthodox view. Throughout the 19th century the drain went on, and today the value of the exploitation is obviously still enormous. The current propaganda of Imperialist groups in Britain such as the "United Empire Party" very frankly admits the great importance of the

exploitation of India to the British bourgeoisie, and puts its total value at a very substantial proportion of the British national income (It should be pointed out however, to avoid misunderstanding, that the figure given by Lord Rothermere, namely 20 per cent of the total British national income, is absurdly high )

This line of thought and propaganda is not confined to these minority and unofficial, though perhaps influential groups. The official Conservative Party at times expresses the same view. We may refer to the now famous speech delivered in 1928 in the House of Commons by Sir William Joynson Hicks (now Lord Brentford) who was then Home Secretary, in which he plainly said that the talk of missionaries and others that the British were in India for the good of the Indians was 'cant'. The British who had won India by the sword and would keep it by the sword were in India for the benefit of their trade in particular that of Lancashire.

The actual magnitude at the present day of the profit received by the British bourgeoisie on account of their control of India, and the consequent loss to Indian economy it is a matter of some difficulty to determine. Lajpat Rai (*Unhappy India*, pages 341-49) quotes various estimates of the annual drain

Mr. A. J. Wilson	1884	£ 50 millions per annum
Mr. H. M. Hyndman	1906	£ 40 millions
Mr. A. J. Wilson	1911	£ 55 millions
Sir T. Morison	(Post War)	£ 21 millions

Digby (*"Prosperous British India"* pages 216-220) gives figures for the period about 1900 which show a drain of £ 38-39 millions per year.

Professor K. I. Shah and K. I. Khambatta discuss the matter for the post-war period with great care in their *Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India*. But for the pre-war period their discussion seems to show that these estimates are too low. They state (pages 234-235) that the total drain cannot be computed from the 'visible' items given in the balance of trade and other figures. But taking only the visible items for the five year period 1909-10 to 1913-14 they reckon an annual drain of 53 crores of which at least 30 crores was direct, while some sum from the remainder

appears not to have been collected, but went to increase Indian indebtedness. These figures calculated on the basis of visible items, agree substantially with the estimates above quoted for 1906 and 1911.

But the matter is discussed more fully for the year 1921-22 (pages 215-36) and they attempt to take into account the invisible items. Their result (page 234) is Rs. 220 crores for the year. One important objection however may be brought against this figure. It seems that the estimate of the British capital invested in India made by the authors is too high. They give (page 220) £ 600 millions in companies registered outside India and £ 35 millions in companies registered in India. Now the External Capital Committee (Report page 3) says "The Return of Joint Stock Companies in British India also gives figures showing the total capital of companies incorporated elsewhere than in India but working in India but an examination of the various companies figuring in the list shows that in many cases, especially those of banks, insurance and navigation companies, it would be unfair to reckon more than a small percentage of the working capital as actually employed in India. (The capital in the three classes of companies named amounts in the year quoted by Shah and Khambatta to some £ 195 millions). Mr M. C. B. Saye, the late Secretary of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce discusses (Statesman dated 29.1.1930) the British Capital in Joint Stock Companies registered abroad but operating in India and cuts down the published figures far more drastically than the External Capital Committee.

He concludes that this capital is at a conservative estimate £ 100 millions, but he later gives figures which enable us to assume that the total including private capital is at least £ 200 millions, and probably a good deal more. He further gives at least £ 75 millions as British Capital in Joint Stock Companies registered in India.

If we take these figures at £ 200 millions and £ 75 millions and substitute them for those of Shah and Khambatta, using the same estimates for the rates of interest and profits we get instead of Rs. 220 crores, Rs. 161 crores.

The further objection may be made that 1921-22 was an exceptional year in regard to price levels etc. and that estimates based on the figures of that time are not typical. We have taken capital investment figures from Mr. Sayer for a later year. The only other relevant figure affected is the volume of trade, which determines the items of transport profits and banking commissions. The Statistical Abstract, 1930, shows however that the volume of trade in 1921-22 was in no way exceptional. The total seaborne trade in 1921-22, including treasure was Rs. 582 crores. That in 1927-28 was Rs. 630 crores. Even at the lower prices the value had increased. These items of the drain, therefore, will have increased rather than decreased. The other items (Home charges etc.) remain approximately constant.

We can therefore, take the revised figure of Rs. 161 crores i.e. £ 120 millions as a sound minimum figure. It must be remembered that Shah and Khambatta have intentionally underestimated all their figures for rates of profits, interests, savings etc. while we have taken figures of British capital investment at what appears to be distinctly a conservative level.

Brockway also seems to assume a drain of the same order. The Indian Crisis, page 41 and onwards gives the following figures: Interest on capital invested £ 35 millions, total trade £ 150 millions, which at the rates usually assumed, 10 per cent trade profits and 10 per cent transport profits gives £ 30 millions, administrative profits etc., £ 328 millions. In addition he states that the High Commissioner's annual expenditure in Great Britain is £ 24 millions, a large part of which is a loss to India not covered by the previous items. If we take only half the last figure, the total is £ 110 millions per annum, and this in spite of the fact that his estimate of the very important item, interest on capital invested, is admittedly low.

The order of magnitude of these figures is confirmed by the following rough calculation made from quite different data. According to Lenin (*Works* "Imperialism" chapter IV) the total British overseas investments in 1914 were 75 to 100 milliard francs, i.e. £ 3 to 4 thousand millions. This is confirmed by Sir George Paish who gave £ 3500 millions in 1910 (Shah and

Khambatta, page 217) It is well-known that the war reduced British overseas investments substantially while investment since the war has been hampered by Britain's growing passive trade balance Hence we may assume £ 4000 millions as a rough figure for the present day According to the report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry (page 29) the total annual income to Britain on account of invisible items (interest shipping, services) was about £ 450 millions for the period 1924-27 rising to £ 488 millions for the year 1927 Now the total British investments in India are about £ 700 millions according to Mr Sayer who however seems anxious to minimise it The figure £ 1000 millions has been given, namely to the Simon Commission (See also P 290 R P Dutt Modern India Page 62) Taking £ 700 millions however that is 17.5 per cent of the estimated total overseas investments If we assume the invisible income of Britain from India to be only 17.5 per cent of the total it is about £ 80 millions for 1927 £ 85 millions But India is not an ordinary foreign country It is a colony The British trade with India is very large From both shipping and services therefore the income will be considerably higher than the proportion of capital alone would show If to this increased total we add the visible item of trade profits etc we get a sum in good agreement with that already calculated

The conclusion is then that the total tribute or drain from India to Britain can be safely put at £ 120 millions per annum

This is a figure very much greater than the pre-war estimates, or than the visible trade balance even allowing addition for public debts and a probable sum for private investments It appears that the difference, which is to be found mainly in the interest and profit on foreign capital invested arises from the systematic difference between the prices of raw materials and partially manufactured goods as handled in India for export and as sold abroad for consumption, and perhaps also vice versa in the import of manufactured goods into India (See the remarks of Shah and Khanbatta, pages 205-207) It is the 'super-profit' which naturally arises from the exploitation of a backward agrarian country by an advanced industrial and capital exporting country



It is certain too that this exploitation has been assisted in a way that would not appear clearly in the figures, by the constant changes in the exchange ratio of the rupee

This is the sum reckoned as profits for the British bourgeoisie. It is as well to notice here what it means from the point of view of India. To a country with a population of 35 crores, an annual loss of Rs. 160 crores may not seem disastrous. But in the first place this is not the total loss. We are not considering the loss to Indian economy due to the Imperialist policy of discouraging its industrial development etc. That is immeasurable. We are considering only measurable loss. We can assume as Shah and Khambatta do (page 237) that the whole sum must be deducted from the Indian annual income. But the burden of British exploitation and occupation upon Indian economy is greater than this. These authors take the expenditure of the Government, other than Home charges, as productive or at least necessary, if extravagant. We cannot agree. The huge expenditure for example on the means of repression and the maintenance of the State machine (106 crores in 1929-30 according to the Simon Commission) can in no sense be considered necessary or useful to India, especially as a large part of it is spent on a non-Indian personnel.

Secondly, it must be remembered that India is not a normal country. Though its population is some seven times as great, its annual income is less than half that of Great Britain. Shah and Khambatta (page 200) give a table showing the gross income of India, from which the various charges have to be deducted to give the income available for enjoyment. For the period 1914-22 it averaged Rs. 1,862 crores; for 1921-22 it was 2,364 crores. Since 1921-22 production has not increased markedly, and prices have fallen, roughly from an index level of 236.232 in 1921-22 to 202.201 in 1927-28 (Statistical Abstract 1930, page 646). Income expressed in money is now less than that of 1921-22. Considered as a proportion of the total income, the British exploitation is a substantial reduction, some 7 or 8 per cent. But the total income of India is so appallingly low that any reduction is an almost unbearable burden.

**Imperialist policy**

The policy of British Imperialism towards India is determined by its interest in maintaining its exploitation. The main considerations of Imperialist policy obviously must be (1) to preserve its political ascendancy, which protects its invested capital, salaries etc., and assists in the preservation of its market and monopoly of raw materials, (2) to safeguard the Indian market from internal competition. This involved in the early days, as was stated previously, measures against Indian handicraft industries and later measures to prevent the growth of Indian large scale industries.

**The Industrialisation of India**

Over this latter question a certain amount of controversy has taken place. It is admitted and agreed that up to the war time British policy was hostile to the industrialisation of India. P 290 R. Palme Dutt "Modern India" pages 46-47, quotes Sir Valentine Chirol and the "Moral and Material Progress Report" for 1921 which shows that the British Government were consciously and actively hostile to the growth of industry in India. Mr. A. G. Clow I.C.S. ("The State and Industry", Chapter 1) relates 'that the policy of the Government of India traditionally was one of "scepticism" as to the benefits of industry. But after the creation of the Department of Commerce and Industry in the Government of India in 1905, some little advance was made, especially in Madras and U.P. But in 1910 Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India gave orders that these efforts should cease. "These orders resulted in the abolition of the Department of Industries as a separate department in Madras. The tanning factory had been transferred to private ownership before they were received, and a weaving factory was closed after their issue. In the United Provinces they resulted in the closing of the cotton seed oil factory and there was for a time a distinct check on official activity in similar directions elsewhere.' Clow gives (page 8) a striking picture of the consequent industrial backwardness of India as revealed by the war. 'The contraction of commerce in the West served to bring home in a striking manner the extent of

India's economic dependence on Europe. So far as materials were concerned, her list of deficiencies, as the Industrial Commission pointed out, was surprising. Electrical plant and equipment, essential accessories of the textile and mining trades, all kinds of machines, tools, boilers, and steam, oil and gas engines were all imported. There was not a machine to make nails or screws, and even agricultural implements were mainly imported. Nor was dependence confined to materials, but a constant supply of Western experts was essential and a number of opportunities were lost when they were not forthcoming. Again in respect of capital, India depended largely on outside assistance and it was not until after the end of the war when the opportunities were disappearing and the risks were multiplying that Indian capital appeared to be losing its customary shyness."

During the war however and the first few years after considerable progress was made in the establishment of large scale industries. It is agreed that among the causes of this development are (1) the shortage and consequent high prices of manufactured goods from Britain etc. which favoured Indian production (2) the desire of the Government to establish some industries especially those which were necessary for the purposes of the armies operating in the Near East -owing to the expense and danger of transport from Britain. Clow says on page 8.

Finally, the continuance of the war presented Indian manufacturers with an opportunity of a kind unknown before. On the one hand there was a big demand for manufactured goods, enhanced by the exceptional requirements of Government. On the other hand the restriction of imports gave producers in many directions a degree of protection from foreign competitors such as only an extremely high tariff could afford in normal times. After the first depression had passed trade entered on a period of increasing prosperity, development and expansion became general.'

Both these factors, especially the former, will tend to be of a temporary character. Another factor has been supposed to have been in operation, namely a general change of policy on the part of British Imperialism towards the industrialisation of India, due

to (1) a desire to make use of the advantages which India offers to the industrial capitalists (namely cheap raw materials, low wages, few legal restrictions on the exploitation of labour, and a large market, arising from the necessities of British Capitalism, and in general accord with the movement of capital in the period of Imperialism ) (2) possibly a desire to conciliate the Indian bourgeoisie who had long been demanding facilities for industrial expansion

In favour of this view are cited some facts (1) the Industrial Commission of 1918, which reported in favour of industrialisation with Government assistance and the Fiscal Commission of 1922 which also recommended industrialisation and various measures which favoured it such as protection, abolition of counter-excite duties and the encouragement of foreign capital investments (P 290 pages 53-54) (2) the striking increase in the exports of British capital to India in the post-war years (the figures are 1919, £ 14 millions

1920, £ 35 ..

1921, £ 29 5 ..

1922, £ 36 1 ..

1923, £ 25 3 ..

The political results of such an economic policy would be a partial satisfaction of the demands of the Indian bourgeoisie and a tendency towards the alliance of this class with British Imperialism

The Workers and Peasants' Party generally took this view The "Call to Action" (P 523), which was published in March 1928 says "This political necessity combined with economic developments dictates the fundamental line of Imperialist political policy within India - the extension of the alliance with the Indian upper classes (feudal rulers, landlords, etc ) to the bourgeoisie as a whole " And again "The partial satisfaction of its needs (i.e. those of the bourgeoisie) and the new policy of alliance with Indian capitalism which Imperialism has adopted " Though it is admitted that (1) the state of industry is one of stagnation (2) the policy of Imperialism in the immediately preceding period has tended to drive the Indian bourgeoisie to the left

The Political Resolution (P 56) adopted that the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference (December 1928) says

' The shortage of an exportable surplus of British capital tends to deprive the British interests of an important weapon used in maintaining their economic leadership. Increasing recourse must, therefore, be had to the political weapon, and the British political dictatorship has been used to force through the rupee ratio, the All British Commission on Constitutional Reforms etc "

But the difficulties of British Imperialism also determine that its fundamental economic and political line of policy shall be maintained. It is British Imperialist policy to industrialise India in co operation with Indian capital though in such a way that British predominance is maintained. the unexpected aggressiveness of Imperialism does not therefore imply a fundamental change in its policy towards the Indian bourgeoisie but only a partial and probably temporary modification.

That is to say the attitude taken by the Workers' and Peasants' Party was admitting the falling off after 1923 of the investment of British capital and the general depression and slow progress of industrialisation to take the Government economic policy (the 1s/6d ratio the Reserve Bank Bill the rejection of Coastal Reservation etc ) and the accompanying political policy (the Simon Commission) as a temporary deviation from its general line adopted after the war of encouragement or toleration of Indian industry, and conciliation of and alliance with the Indian bourgeoisie. This is the so-called 'decolonisation theory' in essence.

But meanwhile the 6th Congress of the Communist International had discussed the matter and had come to the conclusion that this is an inversion of the real state of things. The general line of policy remains roughly as it was before the war namely generally to discourage Indian industry and to keep India an agricultural country. The policy of encouragement or toleration of industry during and shortly after the war was a temporary modification, and after about 1922 this was reversed. Hence the increasingly acute conflict with the Indian bourgeoisie.

culminating up to that time in the threat of withdrawal from the legislatures by the Congress Party, and the general boycott of the Simon Commission.

Now in the first place these facts entirely disprove the suggestion of the Magistrate (Committal Order, pages 68-70) that the attitude taken up at the All-Indian Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference was in accordance with the change of view which had taken place in the Communist International. This point is borne out by the "Labour Monthly" of March 1929 which reprints the "Political Resolution" of the All-Indian Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference with the editorial note that: "It would be easy to criticise some of the features of their view, which has clearly not taken into account the important decisions of the 6th Congress of the Communist International on the Indian question, notably in regard to the industrialisation of India and the dangers inherent in a political party like the Workers' and Peasants' Party based on a union of different classes."

The increasingly critical attitude of the Workers' and Peasants' Party towards the Congress was due to the political line of that body, which, as pointed out in the Political Resolution, was a retreat from Complete Independence, (Madras Congress December 1927) to the Nehru Report (towards the end of 1928).

The second point to notice is that a discussion of the matter, especially in the light of later events shows that the view taken by the Workers' and Peasants' Party was incorrect, and that the Colonial Thesis of the 6th World Congress is correct.

The principal facts brought forward in favour of the view that the policy of British Imperialism is to encourage industrialisation are:-

- (1) The removal of the 3 per cent cotton excise duty in 1925.
- (2) The increased duties on the lower grades of yarn from 11 per cent to 16 per cent.
- (3) The protection given to the Steel Industry. (See Clow, pages 117 to 122).
- (4) Other minor cases of protection accorded by the Tariff Board [on paper made from bamboo (Clow, page 122 and 123) etc.].

(5) The recommendations referred to previously of the Industrial Commission of 1918 and the Fiscal Commission of 1922 which were taken to express the views of the Government

Against these are to be urged —

(1) The three per cent excise duty though not a matter of great importance in itself, had been the cause of much propaganda and dissatisfaction. Further its removal was due immediately to the Bombay Textile Workers' strike in 1925 (Clow, page 125)

(2) The Government was originally opposed to this increase although it had been recommended by the Tariff Board but granted it on pressure from the mill-owners. It is admittedly directed against Japanese competition (Clow, pages 126-127). These grades are not imported from Britain in any quantity.

(3) The Steel Industry (i.e. the Tata Company) is not a purely Indian concern. After its amalgamation with the Bengal Iron Company there has been a considerable proportion of British capital in this firm. Further this is the case of a war industry. The Government has an agreement with the Company for the conversion of the plant to war purposes in the event of war (Sec P 1220 'British War Preparations in India'). And even so in 1927 bounties were stopped and duties reduced and a preferential tariff imposed in favour of British steel (Clow page 121).

(4) The other cases of protection cited are of very small importance. What are more important are the cases in which protection has been demanded and has been refused. The principal cases here are coal, where protection was rejected in order to favour the South African industry (see Clow, pages 121-125), petroleum (Clow page 125), and cotton piece goods (Clow, page 126).

(5) The recommendations of the Industrial Commission although endorsed in general terms by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, were never accepted in full by the Government and Mr Clow has made it clear that the policy there laid down was pursued in a very half-hearted manner. On account according to him, of division of opinion over the question of "central" and "provincial" functions which prevented the formation of the proposed cadre of technical experts, and of shortage of funds, "the

two features which the Industrial Commission had regarded as a chief obstacle to progress, viz 'the lack of a definite and accepted policy, and the lack of an appropriate organisation of specialised' experts remained after the reforms " (A G Clow, "The State and Industry," page 25)

The proposals to form an "Industrial Service" and a "Chemical Service" were dropped (page 28) The newly formed Provincial Industrial Departments were in most cases abolished in 1922 on the ground of economy (page 32) In regard to the Central Government on the recommendation of the Retrenchment Committee in 1922-23 "the Industrial Intelligence section disappeared and with its elimination the new Department became unable to undertake any co-ordinating work in connection with industries The Inter-Provincial Conference came to an end and publications were discontinued and all attempts to assist in provincial activities were abandoned The Labour Bureau was abolished the School of Mines project had to be set aside for the time being (page 34)

In these important administrative functions where the Government could have done much to assist industry, it refused to do so ostensibly on the ground of economy

Further facts are brought forward in connection with the Government's policy towards industry

(1) In 1922 new plans of railway construction were launched involving expenditure of Rs 150 crores, the orders went to British firms in spite of the demands of the Indian bourgeoisie Similarly in 1923 a big order for 3,132 railway cars went to England

(2) The export duty previously imposed on leather and skins was reduced in 1926-27 to 3 per cent Material will therefore be exported more freely and the difficulties of the Indian industry be increased

(3) The proposal brought forward in 1928 to reserve the coastal traffic of Indian for Indian shipping companies was fiercely resisted by the Government and eventually defeated

(4) Finally the financial policy of the Government since the war has been most clearly directed against the interests of Indian industry This is shown by the following facts -



(1) As early as 1920 orders were issued to the Imperial Bank forbidding it to give credits to industrial undertakings.

(2) The exchange ratio has been manipulated in a way which Brockway for example describes as "disastrous" for Indian industry. "The Indian Crisis:" pages 41-42 states: "The fixation of the ratio of the rupee at 2 shillings in place of 1s. 4d. had a disastrous effect upon the post-war prosperity of India. It led to the dislocation of industry and the sale of Reverse Council Bills which dissipated India's gold to the extent of £ 24 millions. The Government subsequently appointed a Currency Commission, upon which Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, one of the ablest representatives of Indian trade, strongly urged fixing the ratio at 1s. 4d. but the Government would not listen to his advice and fixed it at 1s. 6d. The higher ratio has been one of the factors in causing the recent slump in Indian industry and agriculture..... British officials in India, British importers of goods and British investors have all benefitted."

This alteration of the ratio especially the last instance, is probably the step which has caused the greatest perturbation amongst the Indian bourgeoisie and has called forth the most vigorous protest.

(3) The Royal Commission on Agriculture recommended a policy which involved absorption of Indian capital in agriculture rather than industry.

(4) The Banking Inquiry recently finished has pursued the same policy, investigating the means whereby Indian capital can be diverted to agriculture under British control.

(5) The proposals in the Reserve Bank Bill, and implicit in the appointment of the Banking Inquiry are for the centralisation of Indian capital under secure British control. The Bill was dropped owing to strong opposition by the Indian bourgeoisie. But its importance is obvious from the fact that the Government of India "Despatch on Proposals for Constitutional Reforms" 1930, brings forward the proposal once again (page 149) and strongly emphasises its necessity frankly as a safeguard. Its institution is a "condition precedent to any transfer of financial responsibility to a minister answerable to the legislature." (page 150).

Further the Bank must be protected from "political interference" and must work in close relation with the Bank of England. (page 151).

(6) The export of British capital to India, which was considerable immediately after the war, fell off sharply from 1923. The figures are:—

1923, £ 25.3 millions;

1924, £ 2.6 millions;

1925, £ 3.4 millions;

1926, £ 3 millions;

1927, £ 0.8 millions;

1928, £ 7.7 millions;

1929, £ 10.1 millions.

The conclusion which follows from these facts is that British Imperialist policy is generally directed towards the restriction of Indian industrial development, and that the change of policy to be noticed in the war and immediate post-war period and to a certain extent more recently, was a temporary and partial change only. It is admitted that there is a certain tendency for industry to grow, but it is in the main resisted by Imperialism, and is undoubtedly slow.

### **British Control of Indian Industry**

It is necessary to notice that such industry as has developed in India is to a large extent under the control of British capital. According to the Statistical Abstract 1930, (page 593) the number of joint-stock companies in British India in 1927-28 was 5,388 with a total capital of Rs. 256.7 crores, and (page 597) the number registered elsewhere than in India (mainly British) but working in India was 827 with a total capital of £ 617.6 millions. According to Mr. M. C. B. Sayer, the late Secretary of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, ('Statesman', 29.1.1930), £ 75 millions as "the very lowest figure", of the Indian registered capital, i.e. 37.5 per cent is British. The proportion of the capital of joint-stock companies registered elsewhere but working in India, which can be described as invested or operating in India is given by Mr. Sayer at a "conservative estimate" as £ 100 millions. But he goes on to say: "If the resources of other companies not comprised in the foregoing figures and profits accruing in Indian

and reinvested there are included, the total might easily be raised to well over £ 600 millions," (from £ 573 millions) and later:

"It will be evident from the foregoing that for all practical purposes a minimum figure of £ 700 millions would probably not be very wide of the mark."

We can safely assume therefore that the total British capital operating in India is considerably greater than Mr. Sayer's original conservative figure of £ 75 millions plus £ 100 millions. If we subtract Government and other loans etc. from his final total of £ 700 millions, the result is practically £ 300 millions. It can be placed at £ 275 millions without any risk of over-estimation. This is the figure we have used in a previous section in calculation the "drain."

Even if we take the original figure of £ 175 millions the total Indian capital is £ 125 millions and British capital is about 58 per cent of the whole. If we take the more reasonable figure of £ 275 millions the predominance of British capital is seen to be very marked—nearly 69 per cent of the total.

Moreover, these sections of capital, British and Indian, are not separate and competing. Mr. Sayer records the high proportion (over 50 per cent) of Indian capital in jute firms managed by British agents. The Tata Iron and Steel Company is perhaps the best known case of a firm with mixed capital. Mr. Sayer states that there are many other companies run by Indian management—cotton, iron and steel and hydroelectric—in which British capital is to be found. British holdings in cotton especially are large, and big amalgamations of British and Indian cotton firms are now going on.

This is not merely accidental. It is the policy of Imperialism to encourage the investment of British capital in India, at any rate to keep pace with Indian investment, and further to encourage the fusion of British with Indian capital. Mr. Clow on pages 135-136 records that the perturbation of the Indian bourgeoisie about the flow of British capital into Indian industry led to the appointment of the External Capital Committee in 1924. This Committee which was presided over by the Finance Member decided against any discrimination against foreign capital. The report of the

Committee states (page 13): "Nothing could be more disastrous to the industrial development of India than measures which would scare away the external capital invested in it or prevent the local investment of its profits."

D/- 5.1.32.

As to the policy of promoting the fusion of British and Indian capital, Clow quotes (page 135) the statement of Sir Atul Chatterji in the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Government of March 2, 1922:—

"The settled policy of the Government of India, as I think we have mentioned more than once in this Assembly, is that no concession should be given to any firms in regard to industries in India, unless such firms have a rupee capital, unless such firms have a proportion, at any rate, of Indian directors, and unless such firms allow facilities for Indian apprentices to be trained in their works. This has been mentioned more than once, and I can only repeat the declaration."

Indian industry, so far as it develops at all, is to be under the joint control of British and Indian capital, with of course British capital as the leading partner.

Finally we should notice the policy of British Imperialism in relation to the "key industry" in modern economy - banking. We have mentioned the trend of policy in connection with the Banking Enquiry and the Reserve Bank proposals. According to the Statistical Abstract, 1930, (page 284) the position of the Imperial Bank, the 18 foreign (mainly British) Exchange Banks, and the 29 major Indian Joint-Stock Banks was as follows:—

	Capital	Reserve	Deposits	Cash Balances
Imperial Bank	5 6 cr.	5.2 cr.	79.3 cr.	10.9 cr.
Exchange Banks	. .	...	68.9 cr.	8.1 cr.
Indian Banks	6 9 cr	4.2 cr.	60.8 cr.	7.8 cr.

The figures for the Exchange Banks relate only to their branches in India. These figures show that the position of British capital is very strong. This is even more clear when it is pointed out that some of the bigger rupee banks such as the Allahabad

Bank, Calcutta (paid up capital, 35.5 lakhs etc.) and the Bank of India, Bombay (paid up capital one crore) are largely British concerns. The position in regard to banking shows very clearly the subordination of Indian economy to British capital.

### **The Imperialist State**

The second main consideration of British Imperialist policy in India which was referred to before, was to preserve its political ascendancy. The chief means whereby this is achieved is of course the monopoly of State power. The Prosecution have attempted to ridicule our general conception of the State as the organ of a ruling class for the suppression of other classes in society. They have maintained that it is "an institution which.....is there to guard the liberties and rights of all the citizens in the State and to see to the best of its ability that they all get fair play and equal treatment."

In an independent country under a developed bourgeois democratic regime, such a claim may not be, at first sight, without plausibility, though we content very strongly that it is false. But it is surely very rash for anybody to make that claim in India. The State in India is the weapon of a naked class dictatorship—the dictatorship of the British bourgeoisie.

Its form is absolutist. All power is both theoretically and practically in the hands of the Viceroy, who is appointed by the British Government. The administrative machine, which he directs through his Executive Council, (also appointed, not elected) is a bureaucracy, the upper ranks of which consist largely of members of the British bourgeoisie and professional classes, diluted to a small extent by members of the Indian upper classes whose "loyalty" can be relied upon. The ultimate sanctions which this largely British ruling machine depends upon are the Police force, also British to a considerable extent, both in its direction, and in its lower ranks, with its auxiliary organisation of prisons, spies, provocateurs, unofficial agents and informers in every village and every street and factory; and the enormous and expensive army, one-third of the rank and file of which is British, while the officers are still almost exclusively British, the few

Indian officers being drawn from the loyalist classes of princes and landowners. Even the railways and telegraphs are kept manned by an adequate number of loyal British and Anglo-Indian workers, who are paid more highly than their Indian colleagues. (It is interesting to notice that the recent "Despatch of the Government of India on Proposals for Constitutional Reform" insists on the retention of this system on the railways, frankly on grounds of military necessity) (page 169)

A glance at the Budget enables one to grasp immediately the nature of the State. The Simon Commission Report (Volume 11, Part 8 Chapter 3) gives a summary of the estimates for 1929-30. Central and Provincial. Of the revenue, out of a total of 176.47 crores, customs revenue is 51.22 crores, salt 6.35, land revenue 35.48. That is, over 50 per cent of the total revenue is either obtained from the consumer, predominantly the poor, or directly obtained from the peasants. On the other hand, only 16.6 crores or under 10 per cent is income-tax, which is levied on the rich. This position is unsatisfactory even from the Imperialist point of view, and the Simon Commission recommends taxation on agricultural incomes which have hitherto been entirely exempt. From the revenue side alone it is clear that the State in India is an exploiters' State.

The expenditure side totals 175.18 crores. Of this, debt and pensions come to 22.26 crores, the bulk of which of course goes to the British bourgeoisie and their ex-officials. Of the rest, the main items are defence, 55.10 crores. Police, Jails and Justice, 20.59 crores, administration collection etc. 30.64 crores. On agriculture and industries are spent 3.53 crores, medical and public health 6.38 crores, education, 12.57 crores. Of the total expenditure therefore, 106.33 crores or 61 per cent goes on means of repression and the maintenance of the State machine, 22.26 crores or 12.7 per cent on debts etc. mainly representing Imperialist exploitation while even including civil works and the loss on the post office, etc., the expenditure on what are called "nation building" branches is 37.12 crores or 21.2 per cent.

If the Budget on its revenue side reveals that it is an exploiters' State, the expenditure side shows that it is a Police State.

The Legislatures hardly avail to give even an outward appearance of democracy to the system. They were instituted for the purpose of guiding the political discontent of the bourgeoisie into safe constitutional channels, and of enabling the Government to judge more easily the strength and movement of opinion in the country, and they serve no other purpose. The electorate is a very small section of the population, selected on a property basis. The Legislatures have no real power—the most important, the Legislative Assembly, has no nominal power. The major part of the Indian bourgeois representatives went into them after much hesitation, and left them in disgust before their period had expired. Not only the form but the actual operation of the State machine is exclusively in the interests of the British bourgeoisie. We have spoken of the attitude of the State towards the working-class. In relation to the workers and peasants the State is itself an exploiter on an enormous scale, principally of the peasants, but also of a large number of workers, and in relation to the immediate economic problems and struggles of these classes against their other exploiters, it is a class force fighting on behalf of the bourgeoisie and the landlords against the workers and peasants. In relation to the Indian bourgeoisie, as we have just shown, it is a powerful force, directed to defending systematically the interest of British bourgeoisie against those of the Indian bourgeoisie where they clash.

In relation to the political struggle, whether of the masses or even of the bourgeoisie, it fights openly and ruthlessly against any attack upon the political power of British Imperialism. It anticipates open conflict by its machinery of spies and informers which enables it to deal with any potential enemies before they can gather strength. The records of this case show this in relation to the mass movement. But, for example, no less loyal a person than Dr Annie Besant has stated publicly and in the press that her correspondence is opened by the Police. All possible weapons, from silent spying to open terrorism and martial law, are always ready and are constantly used.

Finally a means of the greatest importance used by the State in defence of the interest of the British bourgeoisie, which should

not be forgotten, is the control of ideas. Its education machinery, which leaves 90 per cent of the population safely in ignorance, and miseducates the rest as to the "advantages" of British rule, is the chief means which it employs. But in addition it maintains a very strict watch over what its subjects shall read. It confiscates in the mails all literature, periodical or otherwise, of a revolutionary character and a good deal that is not of a revolutionary character, and "proscribes" wholesale publications which have any seditious tendency. The power of this weapon of intellectual strangulation is enormous.

Such is the State, which the Prosecution assure us, does its best to secure "fair play and equal treatment for all the citizens".

### **Alliance with Feudalism**

But Imperialism has other means at its disposal. Frank and open as its dictatorship is, it cannot rely simply upon its monopoly of force. It is safer and easier to attract the support of such social strata as can be won over without excessive expense.

First and most important of these is the landlord class. Itself a creation of the British or owing its continued existence as a class to the British, it has the strongest motives for "loyalty". And from the princes downward it is as a whole loyal. Next come the bourgeoisie and the upper ranks of the professional class. Though the political movement of opposition to Imperialism has been and is to a large extent led by the representatives of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois class is not united in this matter. A considerable section is Liberal or loyalist in spite of everything. And Imperialism does not give up even the most radical section of the bourgeoisie as inevitably hostile to it. The "Despatch" expresses its confidence that the bourgeoisie will eventually accept the situation and remain a loyal opposition. It has doubts about the "younger men" among the nationalists, but even about them it hopes that constitutional possibilities of advance will win them away from revolutionary courses. Its only irreconcilable enemy it sees in the "masses" and "revolutionary Communism"—and indicates the way to deal with them: first religion and secondly land. (Despatch, pages 9 and 5 to 6.)



From these classes are drawn the necessary Indian element in the upper ranks of the administrative machinery and the services. And with the appearance of popular consent presented by the support of these classes, Imperialism tries to disguise to a small extent the dictatorship which it actually exercises.

### **Communalism**

Another most important means to the hand of Imperialism in keeping its control over the population of India is a skilful use of the differences of race, language and religion among the people. These are not merely utilised for foreign propaganda, though full advantage is taken of them in that way, but are actively promoted and exacerbated.

It is worthwhile to notice that this is a policy which British Imperialism pursues in every colony where it is in any way possible, and this fact alone shows that the Imperialist denials of guilt in the matter are false.

In Ireland the Protestants were, and are, incited to form themselves into a bloc hostile to the Roman Catholics. In Palestine the Jews are made to fight the Arabs. In Iraq, the Sunnis are made to fight the Shias. (This must have required much patient work. Nobody has ever heard of such a conflict anywhere else. Apparently it has not been a very striking success anyway.) In Burma where there are none of the communal differences to be found in India, the Burmans lately have taken to fighting the Indians and the Chinese, who have settled there in considerable numbers. The great difficulty of British Imperialism in Egypt is that it has not found any communal differences to play upon, and has not yet succeeded in creating any.

It is admitted widely that the growth of communal feeling in recent years is due to the Government's policy of instituting communal electorates and representation in 1920, and to the older policy of making appointments etc. on communal grounds. But other means are used. We have cited some cases in which employers have actually tried to arouse communal feeling among workers in order to destroy their Unions. We have the glaring case of the Dacca Hindu-Muslim riots in 1930, when the allegation

was repeatedly made before the official Committee of Inquiry that the local officials, the police and the European special constables supported the Muslim hooligans in their attacks on the Hindu houses, refused to interfere when looting was going on in their presence, and even shared the plunder, saying to those who protested "This is what your Swaraj will be like". The clearest case of all is the Bombay communal riot of February, 1929, which was obviously staged with the purpose of smashing the militant working-class organisations of the city, particularly the Gimi Kamgar Union.

### **British Imperialism will not leave India**

The ruling class which has these enormous interests to protect and this power to use for their protection, and employs these methods for that purpose, is not likely to surrender its position voluntarily. We have tried to show what the possession of India means to the British bourgeoisie in terms of annual income, and any showing its value is enormous. But its real value to the British bourgeoisie is even more than this. India is the centre of the British Empire. It has been said that the Indian Ocean is a British lake. From British South Africa on the south-west to Malaya, Borneo and Australia, on the south-east, practically the whole coast line is in British possession. And India is the centre from which most of these possessions are held. The army which keeps them in subjection is garrisoned in India. The loss of India to the British bourgeoisie would mean also the loss of practically its whole colonial empire.

Dean Inge, one of the ideologists of the British bourgeoisie has recently said: "Individuals may sometimes rise above selfish interests but classes never".

It is not in the nature of a ruling class to relinquish its opportunities for exploitation. And it is perfectly clear that the British bourgeoisie have no intention whatever of giving up their hold on India. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms are now universally recognised to have been a make-believe. They surrendered nothing to the Indian bourgeoisie. It has already been made perfectly plain that the present reforms will be of the same nature. They may offer a slightly more attractive-bait to seduce

the Indian bourgeoisie along the path of constitutional co-operation but they will surrender nothing of importance. If this required demonstration at all, it has been supplied by the Simon Commission Report, the manner of calling, and the nature of the invitations to the Round Table Conference, and most emphatically by the Government of India's "Despatch". The more recent events after the return of Mr. Gandhi from the Round Table Conference and the subsequent conduct of arrests, shootings, lathi charges and ordinances demonstrate the same. And the same will be true however many "steps towards self Government" are taken under the auspices of British capital. Imperialism will never relinquish its hold voluntarily. It must be overthrown.

### **The supposed progressive role of Imperialism in India**

It is often contended that in spite of all its drawbacks its undemocratic character, its exploitation, etc., British rule in India is objectively progressive. It is supposed that the contact of the relatively advanced civilisation of Britain with the relatively backward civilisation of India must result in some benefit to the latter. Apologists of Imperialism point to the 'law and order' which has been established since the commencement of British control, the transport system and the irrigation works and the like.

It is obviously irrelevant to compare the position of India today with its condition 150 years ago. Even for purposes of exploitation some advance has had to be made. And it is impossible to discuss what developments 'might have' occurred in different circumstances. All that to be decided is whether Imperialism is a progressive influence now in the present period.

At the time when the British came to India, Indian feudalism was in a state of decay. The British merchants and soldiers representing a more advanced social class, were able to defeat the Indian ruling classes, and the still feeble Indian bourgeoisie, and establish their control. But from the beginning they began to play a double role. The unification of the country which they effected was historically the task of the bourgeoisie, and was an advance. In the same category comes the establishment of 'law and order' in place of the anarchy attendant upon the decline of feudalism,

there were established the relatively peaceful and orderly conditions necessary for the exploitation of the country by the bourgeoisie. But owing to the weakness of their position as foreigners, the British could not carry through all the progressive tasks of the bourgeoisie. They came to a compromise with feudalism, which, for the sake of its preservation as an exploiting system was willing to become a faithful ally. This system has continued till the present day. The feudal or semifeudal conditions which prevail throughout the land system and practically throughout the whole of society, were becoming obsolete 150 years ago, and today are a complete anachronism, a survival of past centuries which represent an enormous obstacle to advance.

At the same time the bourgeois class of India, at this period the instrument of social progress, was prevented from following its natural path of development. The capital which should have accumulated in its hands and been used for opening up, unifying and industrialising the country, was diverted to Britain. But not merely passively but actively, British Imperialism obstructed the industrialisation of India and as we have shown, this policy persists until the present day. The British themselves have been forced to develop a transport system, to create some industry, and to permit a certain amount of industry to develop in Indian hands. India is officially rated as the eighth industrial country in the world by the League of Nations. Does this not imply progress? It is necessary to realise in what this industry consists. We have quoted the statement of Mr. A. G. Clow as to the industrial position of India as revealed by the war, and its extreme dependence upon imports from Britain. This situation has naturally been remedied to a certain extent. But the essence of that statement is still true. Indian industry is concerned with raw materials and to some extent with consumption goods, especially textiles. But it still manufactures no means of production. The iron and steel industry manufactures pig iron, rails, pipes, sleepers etc., but no machinery. The engineering industry and the big railway workshops are engaged mainly in repair work, apart from the construction of railway wagons. Even wagon production is now in difficulties (Clow, pages 133-134). In short India has

industries, but is not in the full meaning of the term an industrial country Its industry is primarily an appendage of British economy and a means of facilitating British exploitation, not primarily a factor advancing the economic life of India as a whole

Further, India is rated as the eighth industrial country on account of the absolute magnitude of its industrial production But apart from China, India is the largest country in the world, with a population approximately twice as great as that of the next largest country (the U S S R ), and some seven times as great as that of Great Britain, for example In relation to the magnitude of its resources and population Indian industry is obviously very small

Let us consider briefly the condition of the population We will deal separately with the working-class and show its deplorable economic position and the backward state of labour legislation In regard to the conditions of the working-class, India is undoubtedly one of the most backward countries in the world, and advance is extremely slow

We will also deal with the condition of the peasants separately, and show that the social structure in the countryside inevitably keeps agriculture in an extremely primitive state Even capitalist methods in agriculture have hardly made any progress except in the plantations The reforms proposed by Imperialism will inevitably fail to achieve substantial progress, as they do not alter the fundamental class structure of agricultural society Exploitation in agriculture is still feudal and its technique is correspondingly backward and must remain so

Further as we have stated, the reactionary policy of Imperialism in relation to industry puts a burden upon agriculture which its primitive organisation cannot bear The census returns from 1891 to 1921 show that the proportion of the population depending directly upon agriculture has steadily increased The figures are

1891 61 per cent

1901 66 per cent,

1911 72 per cent,

1921 73 per cent.

(P 290 R P Dutt "Modern India" page 43)

The result of the latest census is not yet to hand.

The effect of Imperialist policy over a longer period is shown for example by Digby's statement, on page 131 in his "Prosperous British India", that in the period 1800 to 1825 there were five famines, involving a loss of life of one million while in the period 1876 to 1900 there were 18 famines, involving a loss of life of 26 millions. The investigations quoted elsewhere of Dr. Mann and many others establish the increasing pressure of population upon agriculture without any compensating advance in technique etc. and the consequent intensifying poverty of the peasants. Irrigation is considered to be the outstanding case of an advance in agriculture brought about by the Imperialist regime. We cannot understand how Imperialism can derive such satisfaction from this. It is no question of philanthropy, as is shown by the profits on the irrigation works. (The Statistical Abstract, 1930, page 616-617 shows an average annual profit on capital for all the irrigation works together, for the 10 years 1918-1919 to 1927-1928 of over 7 per cent) and by the means taken to ensure that the indigenous irrigation system which they replaced in some cases should not continue to be used and thus diminish the profits. It is one of the few cases in which the Imperialist monopoly of advanced industrial technique has been infringed with any incidental benefit to India. Over the greater part of industry that monopoly has been jealously guarded, and even in agriculture this represents the only exception of importance. Other modern advanced agriculture methods have not been introduced to any appreciable extent. The great irrigation works are not an instance of the civilising progressive mission of Imperialism in India, they are a monument to what the advanced civilisation of Britain might have done in India but has not.

### **The National Wealth**

In such conditions the economic position of the people as a whole is naturally appallingly low. We have given some facts in regard to the position of the workers and peasants, the great bulk of the population. Taking the population as a whole, including the rich, Shah and Khambatta ("Wealth and Taxable Capacity of

India" page 201) give Rs 58-8-0 as the average income per head per annum for the period 1914-1922. From this has to be deducted about Rs 7 (according to them) for the exploitation of Imperialism, leaving Rs 51-8-0 i.e. about £ 4, or as they reckon it £ 5 for the year 1921-1922 of highest prices. Even from this a further substantial sum should be deducted for a taxation etc which supplies the expenditure of the Government of India including that on the armed forces etc which they reckon (page 261) as Rs 12-8-0 per head. Leaving this aside however, as part of it at any rate may be considered as coming back to the public as services etc, we have the figure of Rs 51-8-0 per head per annum as the average for the whole population, including the rich. These authors give some figures of other nations for comparison

U S A £ 72,

United Kingdom £ 50,

Germany £ 30

etc. No comment is needed on these figures.

They also attempt to show that this figure represents an increase over the pre-war level of 1900-14. Reducing the figure of Rs 58-8-0 in accordance with the estimated ratio of the price levels, they get the result of Rs 38/2/- as opposed to one of Rs 36 for the period 1910-14. It is obvious that on the basis of these admittedly rough calculations such a small difference has little meaning. Even if it is taken at its face value however, it is nothing to boast about. It shows a growth of real income at the rate of about half per cent per annum.

They give certain other figures. Condemning the recent estimates of the Hon'ble Sir B. N. Sharma and Mr Findlay Shirras as too high, and the careful estimates of Digby and of Professor Shah independently, as too low, they cite, Rs 20 in 1871 (given by Dadabhai Naoroji), Rs 27 for 1882 (Baring-Barbour), and Rs 30 for 1901 (Lord Curzon) without discussion of the means whereby they were obtained, as being in rough agreement with theirs. On pages 110 to 111 they give figures in regard to price levels which enable us to make some sort of comparison among these figures. Taking the level in 1873 as 100, they give that in 1901 as 139 (and hence that for 1882 we may assume to be 120) the average for

1914 as 151, and for the period 1914-22 as 231. Reducing these figures accordingly, the result we get is:

		Absolute Figure.	Index.	Reduced Figure.
Dadabhai Naoroji	1871	20	100	20
Baring-Barbour	1882	27	120	22.5
Lord Curzon	1901	30	139	21.6
Shah & Khambata	1900-14	36	151	23.8
Shah & Khambata	1914-22	58.5	231	25.3

It is evident that in the absence of further enquiry as to the modes of calculation adopted in each case, figures such as these cannot be taken very seriously. Those especially for the 19th century are doubtful, as there is reason to believe that the average income fell rather than rose up to 1900. Nonetheless they give a level which cannot be very far from the actual average income. Even when treated in the most favourable way, and taken to mean what they seem to do, they show a position which in any other country would be described as stagnation. They show a fairly constant rise over the period 1870-1920 at a rate of about half per cent per annum.

The Simon Commission (Report, Vol: I, Part 5, Chapter I) do not commit themselves to any statement about the period prior to 1900, but say that economic progress has been achieved since the beginning of the century. But they add: "Even if the most optimistic (estimate) is adopted, the result is that the average income per head in India in 1922 was equivalent, at the prevailing rate of exchange, to less than £ 8, while the corresponding figure for Great Britain was £ 95."

That is the position. Progress as measured in figures may be taking place; but it is on the best showing extremely slow, while the actual standard compared with that of any advanced country is extremely low, probably the lowest in the world.

The sanitary conditions and health of the people are among the worst in the world (Report of Messrs. Purcell and Hallsworth). The expectation of life in India is 22 years. That in Britain is 53 years (P. 290, page 14). Brockway states ("The Indian Crisis",



page 19): "The average length of life in India, which in 1881 was 20 75 years is now 23.5 years. This compares very unfavourably with the 44.5 years of another oriental race, the Japanese."

Conditions in this respect then, are actually getting worse.

The figures of infant mortality are even more striking. The Statistical Abstract, 1930 (Page 391), shows that since the abnormal war and post-war years the death rate under one year has remained fairly constant at 180 to 190 per mile. Brockway compares this with 65 for Great Britain (Page 19).

Such conditions are due primarily to poverty. But Imperialist apologists put blame also upon the "insanitary" habits etc. of the people, just as they blame the villagers' religious prejudices for the progressive impoverishment of the soil. These excuses will not satisfy anybody. Should it not have been the duty of the "advanced civilisation" of the British on the one hand to establish sufficient administrative machinery to counteract these reactionary influences, and on the other to educate the people in such a way as to abolish them? The former of these has hardly been attempted seriously. The latter has definitely been avoided.

This is shown by the facts of expenditure on this matter. The Simon Commission Report (Volume II, Part 8, Chapter 3) shows an estimated expenditure on medical and public health of 6.38 crores in 1929-30 out of a total expenditure of 175.18 crores, that is about 3.6 per cent. The Statistical Abstract 1930 (Page 406) shows that the total number of hospital beds in 1927 was 49,000, i.e. about one to five thousand of the population. This includes hospitals and dispensaries. State aided and otherwise of all sorts. The administrative side of the campaign against sickness and insanitary conditions is obviously very deficient.

Let us consider the cultural position of the people. The position of education is well known. The Simon Commission gives the estimated expenditure on education in 1929-30 at 12.57 crores, i.e. about 7.2 per cent of the whole budget. The percentage of literate persons found by the 1921 census was 7.2 (both sexes and all ages). Though some progress has been made in education since that time, the Hartog Committee (an auxiliary body to the Simon Commission) concludes that the situation in respect of

literacy has improved hardly at all (Report, page 51). The number of pupils in recognised institutions in 1927 was 10.5 millions, obviously a fraction only of the total number of persons of age proper for attendance at schools. Nevertheless this represented a big advance (nearly three millions) on 1922, and this is admittedly due to the new Legislative Councils (Report, page 44). It is perhaps the only advance or gain which can be attributed to the Reforms of 1919.

To sum up, generally we can see that in accordance with the social system which is still feudal in form, the bulk of the population is still extremely backward in almost all respects. It suffers from degrading superstitions and unhealthy traditional customs which bear hardly upon all but especially of course upon the women. And it is well known that almost all the efforts which have been made by the reforming organisations of the bourgeoisie to remedy this situation in one detail or another have been met by the active or passive opposition of the Government, the representative of the "advanced and progressive culture of the West." The communal difficulties are but one aspect of the general cultural backwardness of the population, but they serve to show most clearly the roots of the opposition by Imperialism to any advance. The condition for the retention of India under Imperialist control is its backwardness, economic, social and cultural. India is in fact in this matter in a unique position. Its ancient feudal organisation is maintained and bolstered up long after it has lost all vitality and when the dominant economic force in the country is Capitalism, and consequently the traditional Indian culture which is suited to a feudal society and springs from it, is in a state of hopeless decadence. Nevertheless a Capitalist culture is not allowed to develop freely, because Imperialism prevents the growth of the bourgeois class, and consciously obstructs the progress of education and enlightenment.

The conclusion to which we must come is therefore as follows. When British Capitalism came to India it represented a social system in advance of the feudal system still prevailing in India at that time, and consequently its work in India included some progressive features. It achieved certain of the steps, both

constructive and immediately destructive, characteristic of the bourgeois democratic revolution. But even at that time it included also some reactionary features. Its later work has been to carry through the minimum of advance (the establishment of transport, irrigation, legal and educational systems etc.) necessary for the full exploitation of India, and to prevent any growth beyond those minimum necessities. It has strengthened and maintained a large part of the already obsolete system of feudalism which it found in the country, which constituted a great obstacle to social and cultural advance. The effect is that its policy is now wholly a reactionary one. As we have shown it is in relation to both industry and agriculture a definite fetter upon the advance of the productive forces, while in regard to the social and cultural standards of the people its policy is certainly, and in part consciously, an obstructive and reactionary one.

### **The situation in India objectively revolutionary**

The consequence which follows from the state of things which we have described—the exploitation of India by British Imperialism and the stifling of the economic and general progress of the country is that the situation is objectively revolutionary. The great majority of the population are compelled necessarily to struggle for freedom from Imperialist domination. We shall not discuss the position of the workers and peasants. It is obvious that their policy must inevitably tend to be revolutionary. At the same time even the bourgeois class has the soundest reasons for desiring freedom also. The reactionary policy of Imperialism in relation to industry, its control of the currency of the country in its own interest (the latest pegging of the rupee to a falling pound is a glaring example), its taking for itself the cream of the profits to be obtained from the exploitation of people, and many other major and minor consequences of Imperialist control, all go to determine that the policy of the bourgeois class must be one of hostility to Imperialism. And the intermediate section of the population, the petty bourgeoisie, the lower ranks of the bourgeois class, the artisans, the poorer professional and intellectual strata etc. have as a whole even more to gain than the bourgeoisie from

independence. Only those sections of the population, chiefly the princes and the landlord class, and those upper sections of the bourgeois and professional classes whose interests are closely bound up with the Imperialist machine, which profit from the Imperialist connection, must support Imperialism and can be considered definitely counter-revolutionary.

Revolution is therefore the prospect before India—either soon or less soon, but inevitably at some time. What will be the nature of this revolution? From what has been said it is clear that it must comprehend the following principal elements:—

(1) The most obvious is that it will secure national independence, political independence which involves the overthrow of British rule and the establishment of a completely independent national State, and economic independence, which means the expropriation of all foreign debts etc. Only in this way can be ruinous exploitation of India be stopped, and the way prepared for a general advance of the productive forces.

(2) All the feudal and semifeudal institutions in the land system (landlordism) and in the State (the Indian States) will be abolished completely. As we have seen these are part of the Imperialist exploiting system, which must go when that system goes. But they further constitute a tremendous obstacle to the advance of agriculture and the rural population, and so must be abolished.

(3) It is clear that the revolution must be a popular one. In the circumstances of India at present, it cannot be confined to a mere replacement of one exploiting ruling class by another. It must achieve some form of popular democratic rule and the opening up for the people of immediate possibilities of advance in the matters which touch them nearly, in sanitation, health, housing, education, and social and cultural advance generally.

In short the revolution in India will be of the nature of the bourgeois democratic revolution, modified by the conditions of a colonial country.

### **The Indian Bourgeoisie in Relation to the Revolution**

The question next arises, what social forces will carry through this revolution? As we have said, although the revolution may be

of bourgeois democratic type it does not necessarily follow that it will be carried through or led by the bourgeois class itself. The situation in India and the position of the bourgeoisie leads us to conclude that this is the case here: the bourgeoisie will not lead the national revolution.

Our discussion of the policy of Imperialism in relation to Indian industry led to the conclusion that the policy was on the whole one of discouragement of industrialisation, and hence the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie and the British clash fairly sharply. This is certainly the fact, as recent political events have shown, and in order to get a correct perspective it is necessary to bear this fact in mind. Nevertheless we consider that the Indian bourgeoisie is not objectively capable of pursuing a revolutionary policy. The main reasons for this are as follows —

(1) The close association of British and Indian capital in Indian industry. We have given some facts previously. The British policy is to increase the association of British and Indian capital, under the domination of the former, so that conflict will become increasingly difficult.

(2) The dependence of Indian merchant capital on export and import, which is largely concerned with British goods or is controlled by British interests. This section, the so-called "compradore" bourgeoisie is as in China normally very "loyal" to the foreign interests. Some section of it however has been penalised by the recent alteration of the exchange ratio, and simultaneously hit by the general trade crisis and has become discontented. Its consequent participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement has caused some surprise (Despatch, page 4).

(3) The close connection between the Indian bourgeoisie and the indisputably loyalist landowning interests. The source of the "primitive accumulation" of a good deal of Indian industrial capital is land. A number of leading princes are partaking in industrial activity both in British India and in their States. The lower ranks of the Indian bourgeoisie also are connected with agrarian exploiting interests, as a great deal of capital unable to find remunerative investment in industry is applied to

moneylending, the acquisition of land, and retail trade. In view of the explosive nature of agrarian relations such interests are necessarily politically reactionary.

(4) The general weakness and backwardness and the deeply divided character of Indian Capitalism. It has not even a single united political party. Its forces are divided among the Congress, the Liberal Federation, and various communal and other organisations, which reflect real differences of interest in some cases, though they are able to come together on certain issues, namely in the All Parties Conference and the boycott of the Simon Commission. The bourgeois class split (though the split was only temporary) over the issue of the Round Table Conference and the Civil Disobedience Programme. In view of this weakness, which is realised by the bourgeoisie, and the growing and already very sharp clash of class interests in both industry and agriculture it is clear that a revolutionary policy and movements, which would necessarily have to involve the masses, could not be kept under control by the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeois class in short is too weak, and its interests are bound up too closely with both British Imperialism and Indian feudalism, while the contradiction between its interests and those of the masses, its only possibly revolutionary allies, is too direct to enable it to embark upon a policy of revolutionary overthrow of British rule.

### **The Bourgeois Nationalist Movement**

This analysis is confirmed, and the non-revolutionary character of bourgeois Nationalism shown, by its history. It is unnecessary to follow that history in detail. It is enough to consider the two occasions on which the Indian national bourgeoisie have been driven to organise open mass movements against British Imperialism (the Non-Co-operation Movement of 1919-1922 and the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1931). On both these occasions the bourgeois groups who have financed and actually controlled the movements, and the bourgeois and petty bourgeois politicians who have actively led them, have been extremely careful to restrain their followers and prevent them from

becoming revolutionary. It is a fundamental mistake to consider either the Non-Co-operation Movement or the Civil Disobedience Movement as revolutionary. They of course both contained certain revolutionary elements and possibilities of development, but these have not been allowed to develop.

These statements hardly need any proof, but the following outstanding facts can be cited to confirm them.

(1) Neither movement has been demanded complete independence from British Imperialism. There was practically no talk of it at the time of the Non-Cooperation Movement. In the case of the Civil Disobedience Movement there has been much talk, and the Lahore Congress, December 1929, even passed a resolution demanding Complete Independence. But the leaders have dropped this demand. They have asked for a number of things at different times, ranging from "the substance of Independence" through the famous "eleven points" to a mere "change of heart". But never Complete Independence. (It is worthwhile to touch for a moment upon the history of "Complete Independence" in relation to the Indian National Congress. Resolution of this nature had been brought up from time to time in the Congress Sessions, but were always opposed by the principal Congress leaders, Mr. Gandhi, the late Pandit Moti Lal Nehru etc. But it obtained increasing support from the radical petty-bourgeois wing of the Congress, and in the excitement resulting from the appointment of the Simon Commission etc. in 1927, was passed at the Madras Session with the support or acquiescence of most of the prominent leaders still, this deceived nobody, and the acceptance of the Nehru Report in the Autumn of 1928 by almost all the Congress leaders showed what value was to be attached to their demand for Independence.

At this time however, a section of the so-called "left" leaders of the Congress (principally Messrs. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Srinivas Iyengar and Subhas Chandra Bose) launched the Independence League, which purported to be a serious Independence Party. But as is shown conclusively in P. 56 ("Political Resolution" of the All India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference, December 1928) from a study of the actions and published programme of the

League, the formation of this organisation was simply a demagogic device, having no serious purpose to secure Independence behind it. The conclusions of the A.I.W.P.P. Conference were confirmed completely when many of the leaders of the Independence League accepted the Congress resolution, which went back to Dominion Status, making Independence contingent on the compliance by the Government with certain conditions by the end of the year. Others of the Independence League leaders abstained from voting, while only a small section put up in a fight against this disgraceful retreat. After that nothing more was heard of the Independence League. At the end of the year (1929) the conditions had of course not been fulfilled, and Independence had to be reaffirmed, though the leaders were obviously very unwilling. None the less when the Civil Disobedience campaign began, Independence, even as a demand to be put forward for bargaining purposes was dropped, practically without any dissent from the members who had voted for it. During the negotiations between the Government and the imprisoned leaders in 1930 Independence was not the demand put forward by the latter.

At the Karachi Congress the Independence Resolution was again passed. But the line taken by the Congress leaders since then, and especially their attendance at the R.T.C. has shown again, that it was not seriously meant. At the R.T.C. and in propaganda speeches in England, Mr. Gandhi talked of the "substance of Independence" and defined it in a way which showed that even their moderated demand was put forward for purposes of bargaining and demonstration, and that he knew quite well that he would not get it.

This history really needs no comment. It is obvious that people who can vote for Complete Independence one year and Dominion Status the next year, do not attach any serious meaning at all to Independence. The Government of India's "Despatch" puts the matter with undeniable correctness when it contrasts the bulk of the bourgeois nationalists with the extremist element, the terrorists and others who "have adopted Independence not as a phrase but as a settled aim." (Page 9.)



Independence to the ordinary Congress leader is a "phrase" with which to keep the rank and file contented, and perhaps to threaten the Government. It is nothing more.

(2) The second circumstance we can cite is that in both the Non-Co-operation Movement and the Civil Disobedience Movement but especially the latter, the bourgeois leaders have directed attention away from the fundamental revolutionary question of the "seizure of power" or even from the economic demands of the masses which could lead towards revolution to petty reforms such as the abolition of the salt tax. They have talked of no-tax campaigns, and much more vaguely about no-rent campaigns, but never carried them out. (The recent developments in U.P. are characterised by Mr. Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee as a rent-suspension movement and not a no-rent campaign.) Their greatest weapon has been the boycott of British goods, which, whatever its effectiveness in decreasing the profits of the British bourgeoisie in trade with India, is not in the least a revolutionary weapon.

(3) They have consistently refused to contemplate the use of violence. There is no doubt that relatively few of the Congress leaders believe religiously in non-violence as a principle. (This is shown for example by the conduct of those Congressmen who are, or are associated with, employers of labour or landholders. They willingly tolerate all the exploitation and violence practised upon their workers and peasants, either directly or by the State which supports them.) But on the other hand it is incorrect to attribute their adoption of non-violence to tactical reasons. The real situation is that they do not want that which could be obtained by violence, namely the overthrow of British rule. But for whatever reason, they have incessantly preached non-violence and have publicly condemned and disowned any acts of violence, on the part of their followers.

(4) They have not hesitated directly to sabotage and oppose the beginnings of the revolutionary movement of the masses. The classical case is the termination of the Non-Co-operation Movement in 1922 which was due to the fact that events, such as the Chauri Chaura incident, showed that an agrarian revolution

was developing. During the recent Civil Disobedience campaign the Congress showed by its attitude towards the G.I.P. Railway workers' strike that it would not tolerate the alliance of its movement with the militant workers' movement. Even more revealing was the incident which occurred somewhat later when the peasants began to attack the moneylenders at Kishore Ganj, Mymensingh District, Bengal. The Congress organs denounced their action and called for the intervention of the Imperialist police (Matters went even further after the conviction of these peasants to various terms of rigorous imprisonment. The Amrita Bazar Patrika in a leading article asked the Government to approach High Court to get the sentences enhanced).

In fact the Civil Disobedience Movement is itself to a considerable extent to be looked upon as a means of sabotaging the revolutionary movement. It was started confessedly with a double aim: (1) to bring pressure to bear upon the Government, (2) to check the growing "violence" (that is revolutionary spirit) of the masses. In Mr. Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy of the 2nd March, 1930 he says: "It is common cause that, however disorganised and for the time being insignificant it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt. It is my purpose to set in motion that force (non-violence) as well against the organised violent force of the British rule as the unorganised violent force of the growing party of violence" (Brockway "The Indian Crisis" page 139.)

And again in the letter on the eve of his arrest, he says: "The only way to conquer violence is through non-violence. . . you may condemn Civil Disobedience as much as you like. Will you prefer a violent revolution?" (Brockway, page 146.)

It is clear from this which of his two aims Mr. Gandhi considers more important. And it is certain that this one, i.e. the defeat of the Indian revolution, has been more successful.

Our estimate of the position of the Indian national bourgeoisie is confirmed also by the events of the Chinese Revolution, which affords in some ways a fairly close parallel to Indian history. As pointed out in P. 138 ("Principles and Policy of the Workers' and Peasants' Party") the circumstances of the Chinese national bourgeoisie were such that they could be expected to go much

further than the Indian bourgeoisie in the direction of revolution. They actually did go a long way towards revolution, but before the complete defeat of the foreign Imperialists, they deserted the movement. It is hardly conceivable that the Indian bourgeoisie will ever go as far as did their Chinese counterparts.

The reasons and evidence put forward are sufficient to establish that the Indian bourgeoisie cannot pursue a revolutionary policy. It may act for a time in more or less vigorous opposition to Imperialism but it can never go to the point of revolution against Imperialism. In its actual political activity it is normally as much concerned to check the beginnings of the revolutionary movement of the masses as it is to oppose the Government; and when seriously threatened by the mass revolution, it will become directly and actively counter-revolutionary, and will join with Imperialism against the masses. The claims of the bourgeoisie to represent and lead the whole of the nation are untenable. The bourgeoisie represents for a time a force wavering and vacillating between the counter-revolutionary bloc of Imperialism and its allies, the princes and landlords and the loyal upper classes, and the revolutionary bloc of the workers and peasants and the town poor, the petty bourgeoisie and the revolutionary youths. It vacillates for a time between the two great camps of revolution and counter-revolution, assisting to a certain extent, especially in the early stages, in the growth of the revolutionary movement, but later coming more and more to hamper its growth, to confuse the issue and mislead it, and eventually, as the revolution gathers strength, finding itself forced to line up more and more definitely with the forces of counter-revolution.

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In regard to the ultimately counter-revolutionary role of the national bourgeoisie there can be no doubt. We have seen already how it strives by all means to sabotage the revolutionary movement of the masses, and on one occasion at least has definitely called for the action of the Imperialist Police against the masses. *But the Indian national bourgeoisie has not yet gone as far as some others of its kind. In Egypt for some time a compromise was maintained between Imperialism and the*

bourgeoisie, and the Wafd Party formed a Government headed by Zaglul Pasha in 1924. Under the regime of Zaglul the revolutionary working-class movement was declared illegal and crushed. (See P 2365, page 422 onwards). But the clearest case is that of China. There the national bourgeoisie, after deserting the revolution in 1927, joined with Imperialism to crush the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants, instituted a regime of White Terror which must rank as one of the most terrible in history. P 2365 (page 455) speaks of "the unparalleled White Terror and the physical extermination of the best cadres of the Party." P 444 contains a reprint of an article by the well-known economist and author, Scott Nearing, in which he states that 20,000 were executed in 8 months in this White Terror campaign, which was conducted primarily by the national bourgeoisie, who until a few months before had been members of the same party, the Kuomintang, as the workers and peasants whom they now slaughtered.

### **Can the Bourgeoisie compromise with Imperialism?**

It is necessary here to turn aside a moment from the main subject to discuss a question which arises. We have shown the basis for the opposition of the Indian bourgeoisie to Imperialism, and at the same time concluded that it cannot pursue a policy of revolution against Imperialism. What then will be the outcome of its policy? Can we conclude that the opposition of these two classes will continue indefinitely, or that there are objective possibilities of a satisfactory compromise between them? And if so, on what basis can that compromise be founded?

As we have already stated the general line of policy of Imperialism—the restriction of the development of industry, the control of finance and banking etc. etc.—is such as to give no basis for a compromise at all satisfactory to the desires of advancement of the Indian bourgeoisie. And as is pointed out in P 56 ("Political Resolution"), this line of policy is necessitated by the position of the world, and the general decline in the economic power of British Imperialism. It is not in a position to grant substantial concessions but must on the contrary try by all means

to increase its exploitation and the strength of its political dictatorship in India. This policy was well developed and easily to be noticed in the period discussed in the "Political Resolution." It has become better defined and more pronounced since then. The chief indications of a political character are:

(1) The Simon Commission Report. As pointed out by all nationalists this report recommends no "advance" in the position of the Indian bourgeoisie at all. In the Provinces it has given the promise of slightly greater influence, though still under rigorous safeguards, but administration, which is the nature of Provincial Government, is not what the bourgeoisie want. They want power to influence the general economic policy of the country. This means power at the centre. And in this respect the Simon Commission recommends if anything a step backward.

(2) Essentially the same is true of the next most authoritative pronouncement of Imperialist policy, the Government of India's "Despatch". This makes some nominal concessions in regard to the participation of the Indian bourgeoisie in the Central Government. But it hedges these concessions about with numerous precautions—a Reserve Bank safeguarded against political interference, and working in co-operation with the Bank of England, a consolidated fund as the guarantee of the payment of "Home charges" and other Imperialist claims; and supervision of financial affairs by the Imperial Government, with powers to take over control in case of default; so that the ultimate result would be not a strengthening of the position of the Indian bourgeoisie, but a consolidation of the position of Imperialism.

(3) The firm line taken by Imperialism against the Congress. In all the long series of Viceregal pronouncements, the interviews with Congress leaders, and the latter attempts at mediation, the Government never retreated or showed willingness to commit itself to any concession. The Congress leaders "grovelled" in their anxiety to find a basis for agreement, which would have enabled them to postpone or suspend direct action. But the Government apparently welcomed a "trial of strength", knowing that it would ultimately have to offer less to a beaten enemy. The vigorous and deliberately provocative manner in which it attacked the Civil

Disobedience Movement shows the same attitude, as also does its firmness in the final negotiations which compelled the Congress to capitulate. (This is what we have to say with regard to the policy carried on by the Labour Government and Lord Irwin as Viceroy in India. But very recent events have proved that, as the Manchester Guardian a couple of days ago has put it, this Irwinism has gone and the firmer hand of Hoare-Willingdon has begun.)

(4) The increasing extent to which the States are brought forward as, in effect, a counter to the bourgeoisie. This was to be noticed from the time of the appointment of the Butler Committee. The Nehru Report itself mentions that its authors have no doubt that "an attempt is being made to convert the Indian States into an Indian Ulster". (See P. 904). This policy has come to the front in the Simon Commission Report, and in the similar insistence of the "Despatch" (pages 32-34) that special landlords' representation must be retained, in view of the "steadying effect" their representatives will have upon the legislature.

But its most definite expression is found in the decisions and suggestions of the Round Table Conference. Imperialism has displayed the greatest enthusiasm for the new departure of the princes in "voluntarily" coming forward as a part of the structure of the All-India Federation. Two points are particularly to be noticed that the appointment of the States' representatives to the Federal Legislature is to be in the hands of the rulers (Federal Structure Sub-Committee Report paras 24 onwards) and that the States will obtain a representation greater than is warranted by the proportion of their population to the whole, especially in the Upper Chamber (paras 28 and 31). The second Round Table Conference has suggested 40 per cent for the Upper and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  per cent for the Lower Chamber. Moreover, these representatives will take part in decisions of all questions, even those which do not directly concern them (para 36). These decisions of the first Round Table Conference have not been altered by the Second.

(5) Finally, the results up-to-date of the Round Table Conference as a whole. Though the Imperialist representatives claim that these decisions and proposals involve considerable

concessions to Indian nationalism, they actually concede very little. The official Government statement made by Mr. MacDonald at the end of the first R.T.C. (Report pages 72-83) put forward these points as concessions:

- (1) "Status" of equality.
- (2) "Responsible Government" with safeguards, i.e. responsibility of the Government to an elected Federal Legislature, including conditional responsibility for financial policy.
- (3) "Full responsibility" in Provincial Government, and a more liberal franchise.

The limitations and safeguards, however, are so numerous and important that these concessions in effect amount to very little. The principal among them are:

- (1) The powers of the Governor-General which are:
  - (a) To be solely responsible for defence and external relations (including relations with the Indian States outside the federal sphere) during a period of transition (Federal Structure Sub-Committee Report, para II).
  - (b) To act in case of emergency in responsibility to Parliament in regard to securing "the peace and tranquility of any part of the country," avoiding "serious prejudice to the interests of any section of the population," and securing members of the public services in any rights guaranteed to them by the constitution. (Para 16).
  - (c) "Ordinary" right to refuse his assent to Legislative measures and to return a bill for reconsideration; and "existing powers of reservation and disallowance" will remain. (Para 21).
  - (d) Power to "carry on the King's Government" if the constitution becomes unworkable. (Para 23).
  - (e) Powers in connection with finance.
- (2) Financial safeguards.

These are:

- (a) Funds for payment of interest and sinking fund on loans, and salaries and pensions of persons appointed on guarantees given by the Secretary of State, are secured as consolidated fund charges. (Para 18).

- (b) Funds for reserved subjects will similarly be provided for. (Para 14). (These two heads together take well over half the revenues of the Central Government at present).
- (c) A Reserve Bank will be instituted, entrusted with the management of currency, and exchange (Para 18), and until this is done the Governor-General is to have "adequate control over monetary policy and currency." (Para 20).
- (d) The Governor-General's sanction is necessary for the introduction of bills to amend the Paper Currency or Coinage Acts (Para 18).
- (e) The Governor-General has powers in regard to budgetary arrangements and borrowing, "to intervene if methods were being pursued which would in his opinion seriously prejudice the credit of India in the money markets of the world." (Para 18).

The Governor-General has power to appropriate funds to implement any decisions made in pursuance of his special powers. (Para 16).

(3) Limitations on the Constitution of the Central Legislature

- (a) We have referred to the proposed representation (and over representation) of the reactionary princes.
- (b) The Upper Chamber is to consist of "members whose qualifications should be such as will ensure that it is a body of weight, experience and character," (in other words of extreme conservatism like the present Council of State.) (Para 26).
- (c) The Lower Chamber, in addition to the members elected in the ordinary constituencies will contain representatives (in general of course loyalists) of special interests: the depressed classes, Christians, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Landlords, Commerce, Labour, and the "Crown", (Para 34). (The second R.T.C. decided to dispense with the last named special representatives, i.e. those of the "Crown.")



- (d) Ministers (the Governor-General appoints the Chief Minister, who in turn appoints the others) will not have to resign unless faced with a hostile vote of 2/3rds of the Chamber (Para 35)

(4) In the sphere of Provincial Government, where it is claimed that 'full responsibility' has been given, almost equally formidable reservations and safeguards are found in the powers of the Governors which are, 'to dissolve the legislature, to withhold assent to Legislation, to return Bills for reconsideration to reserve Bills for the consideration of the Governor-General to dismiss Ministers, to act independently of Ministers in matters including the protection of minorities and safeguarding the safety and tranquility of the province and in emergency caused by the breakdown of the constitution to carry on the administration' (Provincial Constitution Sub-Committee's Report, para 6) In addition it should be noticed that in the Zamindari provinces (Bengal Bihar and the United Provinces) where opinion has been expressed in its favour second Chambers may be instituted—to render impregnable the position of the landlords

(5) Generally the communal question has utilised to the full. The matter was felt to be so important that the Prime Minister himself had to preside over the deliberations on this subject. The result was that the only possibility of agreement was found to be in separate communal electorates including possibly a separate electorate for the latest proteges of Imperialism, the depressed classes (Minority Sub-Committee's Report, para 8) The second R T C carried this policy further still. Eventually under pressure from the British the Moslems and the other minorities practically refused to come to any agreement at all.

(6) It is laid down that there should be no discrimination against British commercial interests (Para 14)

(7) Recruitment of British subjects for the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police Service is to continue (Services Sub-Committee Report para 3)

(8) The Imperialist demand, made on strategical grounds, for the separation of Burma, is carried through (Burma Sub-Committee Report) A special Burma R T C has now been

instituted, though without any express agreement by the Indian representatives at the general R T C

The total result as it appeared at the first session of the R T C can be summed up in the words of Mr Brailsford, a supporter of the Labour Government then in office "An elaborate mechanism, checks and balances, carefully devised with the object of making a quick movement of considerable change impossible ( Leader' 8/2/31) It was of course stated that these arrangements were not final and further modifications as a result of negotiations were contemplated Mr Gandhi said that the R T C had not conceded half enough ( Statesman 7/3/31) But no conceivable modifications in detail could alter the fundamental character of this scheme, the effect of which was not to change the position essentially

The second R T C if it has done nothing else has shown that no further modifications or concessions are to be made The reports accepted by the Federal structure or other Sub Committees make no important change in the decisions of the first sessions In his final statement Mr MacDonald claimed with apparent pride that the declaration of January 1931 still stood It was taken by the Liberal Nationalist delegates to the second R T C as a matter of satisfaction that the British Government had made no retreat since the first session Actually they were assuming too much The British Government used the second session of the R T C to develop a stage further its manoeuvre with the Indian States and to consolidate its alliance with the Muslim communal leaders and depressed class leaders and through them effectively to block the demand for greater concessions by the other delegates The true position is shown very clearly by the concluding statement by the Prime Minister and the speeches of Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State and Mr Baldwin during the House of Commons debate on the R T C (December 3 and 4 1931)

The Prime Minister's closing statement says 'With regard to Central Government I made it plain that, subject to defined conditions, His Majesty's late Government were prepared to

recognise the principle of the responsibility of the executive to the legislature, if both were constituted on an All-India Federal basis"

This passage acquires significance in view of the hesitations and doubts expressed by an important section of the princes after their original enthusiastic acceptance of the idea of an All-India Federation. The Government not only insists on having its staunch allies, the princes, as an essential part of the future Federal Government of India, but keeps some of them in reserve now at the present stage so that, if the need arises, it can make use of their position to refuse further concessions.

With regard to the safeguards etc. Sir Samuel Hoare, repeating a little more explicitly the words of the Prime Minister's statement said "We are prepared to make an advance to responsible Government both in the centre and in the provinces upon certain definite and specified conditions. There were two conditions: the first condition was that the responsible Government at the centre must be an All-India Government representing both British India and the Indian States; and the second condition was that several obligations which had resulted from our long association with India must be safeguarded. First of all, until India was in a position to defend itself, our command of the army must be clear and undisputed, and our control of foreign affairs must be reserved. Secondly, our relations with the princes must be retained by the crown. Financial stability must be effectively safeguarded and so ultimately must be internal security. The minorities must be protected. There must be no unfair economic and commercial discrimination against British traders. The rights of the services recruited by the Secretary of State must be safeguarded."

To remove all possible doubts, Mr. Baldwin wound up the debate. "Referring to the question of the transition period Mr. Baldwin said that nobody at present could say how long it would last, but it would last just as long as it was the will of Parliament that it should last, and if and when the constitution was established, nothing there in could be relaxed, without the consent of Parliament."

Imperialism, which can make concessions only at serious loss to itself, shows no desire at all to do so

We conclude therefore that there is no objective basis for a lasting compromise really satisfactory to the aspirations of the Indian bourgeoisie. Compromise of a permanent character will come, if at all, only when the mass revolutionary movement drives the bourgeoisie into open counter-revolutionary alliance with Imperialism (the temporary Irwin-Gandhi Pact has been set at naught by Imperialism within a very short time after its adoption. The recent developments do not change the view expressed by us at all. On the contrary, they strengthen our arguments)

But it has to be remembered that the national bourgeoisie made an effort to force concessions in the Civil Disobedience campaign which undoubtedly surprised Imperialism both by the extent of the support which it has obtained, even from the big industrial bourgeoisie and the merchants of such places as Bombay, (Despatch (page 4) and by the extent to which it succeeded in mobilising the petty bourgeois and even the peasant masses and keeping them under its control. In this situation it is possible (the attitude of the Congress and Mr. Gandhi in sticking to a policy of co-operation at all costs make it probable) that some sort of nominal compromise may be achieved, as was achieved in the equally difficult case of Egypt the Labour Party was in office in 1924. But our analysis of the fundamentals of the position holds good. There is no objective basis for a final compromise. The compromise which may be reached will be a surface compromise only, based on no real concessions by Imperialism. And in time the Indian bourgeoisie will find this out as did the Egyptians. The result will be the same—a temporary lull in the struggle, and resumed conflict later, with the bourgeoisie in a more difficult position owing to its error of having fallen into the Imperialist trap.

### **Dominion Status**

The Chinese bourgeoisie, by leading the mass movement to the point of open insurrection, were able to force a fairly favourable

compromise with the Imperialist powers, at any rate in South and Central China. They achieved effective control of the country, at the price of recognising foreign loans and investments and economic interest generally. With this they are satisfied. They no longer conduct a movement of any vigour against Imperialism. They have achieved "Dominion Status".

The demands of the Indian bourgeoisie have in the past been pitched at a lower level than the attainments of the Chinese bourgeoisie. Their demands, as formulated in the Nehru Report, ever supplemented by the "eleven points" of Mr Gandhi, were essentially for "Dominion Status with safeguards". The general sanctity of British investments and economic claims was recognised, i.e. Dominion Status, not Independence, was the economic essence of the demand, while British control of the army and foreign affairs and the appointment of British Governors and Governor-General was agreed to. Later, under pressure from behind, the bourgeoisie has been obliged to raise its demands, and at the Karachi Congress the decision was for

"Complete Independence" defined to include control of the army, foreign affairs and finance and fiscal policy. But even this resolution proposed "partnership with Great Britain, and admitted the possibility of modifications (safeguards) if demonstrably necessary in the interests of India" while the economic obligations of India to Britain were admitted in principle, the demand being for scrutiny by an impartial tribunal. The resolution, however, also approved of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which was based on acceptance of the decisions of the first R.T.C., as a basis for discussion, and authorised Mr Gandhi to represent the Congress at second R.T.C. During its session in London Mr Gandhi defined and modified this position still further. He agreed to the principle of no discrimination against British commercial interests; and actually proposed two very liberal formulas on the subject himself. He also denied having asked for the withdrawal of the British army. The 'Leader'

dated 20/11/31 publishes these particular proceedings of the R.T.C.:

Chairman (Lord Sankey): ". . . I do not think it would be in the interest of India to comply with the immediate request to withdraw the army".

Mr. Gandhi interrupting said "May I just correct you? I have not asked for the withdrawal of the British troops. I do not think there is a sentence in my remarks to that effect, and if I did utter a sentence of that character, I shall like to withdraw it."

His final manifesto issued after the Prime Minister's concluding statement, repeated the demand for "Complete Independence" not excluding partnership with Great Britain and accepted again the principle of "safeguards in the interest of India." He consented also to remain a member of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee for its further discussion of safeguards. This is the position with regard to Imperialism.

In regard to feudalism no demands are put forward at all. The Nehru Report specifically safeguards landed property, and this has been confirmed recently by Mr. Gandhi. The general democratic demands are weak even universal suffrage is put forward doubtfully and after much discussion.

Though we consider that such a compromise cannot come about, it is worthwhile to see what would be the situation if a compromise of a permanently satisfactory character were arrived at. The basis of such a settlement would have to be the satisfaction of most of the demands just considered. It would give relative freedom for the Indian bourgeoisie to develop industry behind tariff walls, to monopolise its coastal traffic, to fix the rate of exchange of the rupee and generally to have complete control of its finances etc. but in other respects the Imperialist financial and economic interests would be maintained. It has been made very clear on many occasions, e.g. in the Nehru Report, and in the recent interview given by Mr. Gandhi to a press representative ('Statesman' 8/3/31), that no discrimination against British capital would be attempted or allowed.

But otherwise the position of the country as a whole would not be altered appreciably as is shown by the nature of the demands and concessions which we have summarised. The exploitation of the people would continue. The population as a whole would be held back in its development by the drain of its economic resources. The feudal structure of society and the land system would remain. Even the progressive functions of the bourgeoisie would not be realised to the full, owing to its continued dependence upon British Imperialism and its closer alliance with feudalism. All that could be claimed would be that the struggle of the people for freedom would be made easier if the demands (contained in the eleven points, for example) for the abolition of the C.I.D., the reduction of the expenditure on the army by half, modification of the Arms Act etc. were granted. But everybody knows that in no conceivable circumstances while Imperialism remains would these demands be granted. And it is doubtful if the bourgeoisie would want them. In the circumstances outlined here the Indian bourgeoisie would become, to a far greater extent than now, an ally of British Imperialism against the masses; and it would need all the protection afforded by the army, the Arms Act and the C.I.D.

The kind of relations which would result in these circumstances between Imperialism and the national bourgeoisie on the one hand and the masses on the other, are foreshadowed by the decisions of the R.T.C., and the terms of the "truce" agreed to on that basis between the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi on 4/3/1931. The R.T.C. decisions have been condemned by Mr. Brailsford ('Leader' 8/2/31) who asked, "How does the balance of power stand between the landlords and the tenants, debtors and usurers?" And Mr. N. M. Joshi, who took part in the Conference describes them as "calamitous for labour." ('Leader' 24/1/31.)

The main points in this connection are:

(1) Suffrage is restricted to a maximum of 25 per cent of the population (possibly as little as 10 per cent) on qualifications of property and education. (Franchise Sub-Committee's Report, para 4). Labour will be "represented" presumably by nomination in the Central Legislature (same Report, para 34) and possibly in the

Provincial Legislatures. [Provincial Constitution Sub-committee's Report, para 7 (c)].

(2) While special representation for landlords (who are economically powerful enough not to need it) is provided for in the Central Legislature, and also in fact in the Provincial Legislatures, if the proposals in regard to the second Chambers are carried out, no special care of any sort is taken for the peasants.

(3) The States are left, in regard to internal matters and also federal representation, entirely subject to the discretion of the princes. The recommendations are so reactionary in this respect that the bourgeoisie of the States, through the State Peoples' Conference, have begun propaganda demanding a declaration of rights, direct election of States' representatives etc.

(4) Labour, factories, etc. are not made definitely federal matters. They are subject to concurrent powers of legislation, federal and provincial. [Federal Structure Sub-committee's Report, Appendix I (c).] It will therefore, as Mr Joshi points out, be extremely hard to get any Labour legislation passed.

(5) These are the features which relate more especially to the interests of the masses. But it is clear that the whole system of limited, communal electorates, second Chambers packed with selected reactionaries, Governors' and Governor-Generals complete powers of veto, etc., a system of "checks and balances carefully devised" to render the progress of the bourgeoisie impossible, will operate even more disastrously against the interests of the masses.

This being the nature of the first Round Table Conference decision in relation to the masses, nevertheless the decisions were accepted by the Congress as the basis for the compromise of March 4, 1931. Section 2 and 3 of the Government of India's statement of 5th March 1931 run:

"As regards constitutional questions the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference... ..steps will be taken for the participation of the



representatives of the Congress in the further discussions that are to take place on the scheme of constitutional reforms "

Further, although the peasants and the poor petty bourgeoisie of the towns had done much of the work of the Civil Disobedience Movement, and had undergone most of the suffering involved, they were shown little consideration at the time of the truce. According to the official statement of the terms of settlement of 5th March 1931, although the surrender of the Congress was complete (all activities, including boycott of British goods, picketing beyond the provisions of the law, etc. are given up) nevertheless the reciprocal concessions by the Government were by no means complete and many of the poor followers of the Congress had to suffer. The inquiry into the Police excesses was dropped. If it would have been any satisfaction to innocent villagers who had been injured and caused loss by the Police to see the official responsible punished, they lost that satisfaction. All Ordinances of a repressive character were not withdrawn. Ordinance No. 1 of 1931, directed nominally against the Terrorists, continued to operate. All notifications declaring associations unlawful were not withdrawn. The Burmese peasants continued to be imprisoned under their provisions. Prosecutions against Police and Soldiers and those charged with violence were not withdrawn. Soldiers and Police and prisoners guilty of violence were not released. The Garhwal Riflemen, whose (completely "non-violent") action was of the most valuable results of the whole campaign, will complete their long sentences. Property seized was not returned if it had been disposed of. The valuable printing presses of bourgeois Congressmen, which nobody would buy, were returned. But the holdings of peasants, which had been sold in large numbers, were not returned. The peasants' holdings even if not yet sold, were not returned, if the Collector "had reason to believe that the defaulter would contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him." Finally posts rendered vacant by resignations and permanently filled were not given back to the late incumbents. Even where the posts had not been filled the cases were "considered on their merits."

When the negotiations between the Viceroy and Mr Gandhi were going on at Delhi most of the leading Indian commercial and industrial magnates either came or were called to Delhi to give their views. But not a single Labour representative, of however moderate a character, was invited.

Though a final compromise between the Indian bourgeoisie and Imperialism has not come about and the former may again require the support of the masses against the Government, yet they neglect the masses and their interests in this flagrant manner. The recital of these facts really supplies all the commentary that is needed on the "Socialist" programme passed shortly afterwards at the Karachi Congress. It was so obviously make-believe that even the Congress leaders and organs themselves hardly pretended to take it seriously. It is not necessary to spend any more time on it.

At the second R T C Mr Gandhi made a demagogic speech in which he represented himself and the Congress as representatives of the poor but no important change was made in the reactionary decisions which had been taken on this matter at the first R T C. The effect of such a final compromise therefore, supposing it to be possible, would not essentially alter our analysis of the situation, the class relationships or the policy which we should have to pursue. In place of the two classes, the Indian and the British bourgeoisie, keeping up some relations of partial hostility to each other and from time to time attempting to use the masses against each other, the two sections would have become one exploiting and ruling class without serious internal differences. The position of the masses would remain as it is: its essential task would remain, only the tactics of its struggle would be altered in some small degree.

### **The Revolutionary anti-Imperialist Front**

To resume our discussion we have established that the bourgeoisie cannot lead the Indian revolution, and that it stands in a position separate from the revolutionary classes in Indian society, and must ultimately oppose the revolution. We believe also that the petty bourgeoisie cannot lead the revolution. This class, especially the urban petty bourgeoisie certainly includes

large sections which are objectively interested in the success of the revolution, and will gain by it But as argued in P 138 ("Principles and Policy") and P 523 ('Call to Action") and as we fully agree the petty bourgeoisie as a class is incapable of leading the revolution

This view may seem paradoxical in India where among those classes interested in the attainment of the revolution it seems owing to its education etc., and its present degree of political consciousness, to be obviously marked out to take the leading part But the petty bourgeoisie is not strictly speaking a class at all It is a heterogeneous group of strata and sections having roughly similar economic standards but no homogeneity of economic functions and no other social bond to unite it And the political consciousness which distinguishes some part of the petty-bourgeoisie reflects the divided and indefinite position of the class It has none of the consistency of the political consciousness of such comparatively homogeneous classes as the working-class or even the peasantry It may at one time follow the bourgeoisie in some form of halfhearted Nationalism it may at another tend towards a revolutionary independence policy it may incline towards Socialism or Fascism or Pan Asianism or Communalism or any other momentarily fashionable mode of thought Such revolutionary consciousness as it may develop is seldom marked by consistency or depth It is not presented as the working-class is with a direct exploiting class, which is easily and certainly distinguished as its enemy Owing to its position it is not able easily as the working-class is to appreciate the real nature of the present economic and political system It tends to present a system of society to itself in personal terms, as its own existence is an individualist one Hence the most consistent and determined revolutionary policy which the petty-bourgeoisie as such develops is terrorism And, as we have pointed out repeatedly terrorism as a revolutionary policy is generally entirely useless The petty-bourgeoisie is not united as a class, is insufficiently capable of being organised, and has not sufficiently clear-cut interests to act as the powerful united driving force which is required for the leadership of the revolution It is not a class which can take the lead It can only be led

The events of the past few years in this country show that this account of the petty-bourgeoisie is correct. From about the year 1926 onward, the petty-bourgeoisie had been moving steadily to the Left—towards independence and opposition to the Dominion Status demanded by the Congress and against the doctrine of non-violence. The growing Independence Wing in the Congress and the predominant section of the Youth Movement was of this nature. But the depth of their radicalism was tested already in 1928. In that year a pseudo-revolutionary peasants' movement was launched in the Bardoli Taluka under the lead of Congressmen, and the "revolutionary" youth supported it vigorously and quite uncritically, while they neglected the genuinely revolutionary workers' movement, which was rising quickly all over the country at the same time. Clearer still is the revelation of the position in 1930. At the Lahore Congress 1929 they forced the leaders to adopt Complete Independence and almost overthrew non-violence. But once the bourgeois leaders gave the signal and began Civil Disobedience their lack of revolutionary consistency and determination showed itself. They raised not a word of protest when Complete Independence was dropped by the leaders, and for all their opposition to non-violence and their cries of "Long live revolution", they meekly 'made salt', offered Satyagraha and crowded into the jails. A small section revolted at his betrayal and took to terrorism. Practically no section of importance stuck to the genuine mass revolutionary policy, which it had been declaring for so long.

The experience of other countries completely confirms our view. On very few occasions has the petty-bourgeois class broken loose from other classes and pursued an independent revolutionary policy. It did so for a time during the French Revolution, but confronted by its own fundamental lack of a definite system of class interests, and therefore of a definite policy, it was soon brought back under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. In the Chinese revolution the petty-bourgeoisie again for a short time took an independent line. During the stage of the first growth of the revolution in 1925-26, it contributed to organise and rouse the workers and peasants under the banner of

the Kuomintang, i.e. of the bourgeoisie. When the betrayal and desertion of the bourgeoisie developed in 1927, some section of the petty-bourgeoisie tried to maintain the united front, and, that failing, it broke nominally with Chiang-Kai Shek and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and formed an independent Government at Wuhan. But within a few months it had to define its position—either with the masses or with the bourgeoisie. It of course chose the latter. Thus even in such cases as those in France at the end of the 18th century and in China today, where the working-class is weak and ill-developed, the petty bourgeoisie can play no permanent independent part. (In more developed countries, as Marx and other historians have pointed out, the line of the petty-bourgeoisie is always to vacillate and follow that class which seems for the moment to be victorious.)

As we have stated in dealing with the working-class movement individuals from the petty-bourgeois class can and do perform useful service for the mass revolution, but not as members of that class. They do this service only by bringing their technical qualifications and using them in the organisation and preparation of the masses for revolution in the spirit of the working-class political policy.

This is why we have always devoted considerable attention to the Youth Movement, the organisation of the petty-bourgeoisie, and to the National Congress. We have pointed out to them that the historical role of their class, in spite of its revolutionary enthusiasm, is betrayal of the revolution, and that in order to serve the revolution genuinely as large a section of them as possible must come over to a conscious service of the mass revolution. We have done this by exposing the reformism of the national bourgeoisie on the one hand, and on the other the inability of the petty-bourgeoisie as a class to break loose from the leadership of the bourgeoisie. It was in demonstrating, to them these incontrovertible facts that we 'debauched their minds.'

### **The Workers and Peasants**

Among the masses we have always held a view that the industrial working-class must take leading place. This has caused

the Prosecution some amusement, but we insist that it is natural and correct. In spite of comparatively small numbers, the working-class inevitably will take the lead of the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle.

The principal motive power of social progress in the modern period lies in large scale industry. The industrial town is the leader in society today. The village can only follow. The peasantry represents a backward reactionary mode of production which is deemed to disappear. Such a class can hardly take the lead in a movement of social advance.

In consequence of its mode of production and life, the peasantry is culturally more backward than the working-class. The working-class, being directly confronted with Capitalism, achieves a more thorough understanding of the nature of the modern society than the peasantry. It acquires further a more complete class consciousness. It can form general ideas and policies and fight for them. The peasantry on the contrary is condemned to a relatively narrow range of interests. General political policies will not readily penetrate its understanding. This narrowness was shown for example during the civil war and intervention in Russia. The working-class knew what it was fighting for and was consistently Red. The peasantry on the other hand in many areas after seizing the land would accept the rule locally of which ever side was temporarily successful and rose again to fight only when the whites attempted to re-establish landlordism. The local narrowness of the interests of the peasantry is also well known. They will readily join together and fight against their own exploiter, moneylender or landlord but only with much greater difficulty will they organise over large areas as a class to fight the landlords as a class. The working class on the other hand very easily acquires a national and even an international class consciousness. In view of its more developed culture if the two classes are associated, the working class inevitably takes the lead.

Further in contrast to the peasantry, the working-class is more homogeneous class. There is very little clash of interests between different strata of the working-class, as there is between

different strata of the peasantry. The working-class is concentrated and disciplined to act as a united force by the conditions of its life and work, in a way that neither the peasantry nor any other class can be. It is given by its experience of exploitation a more complete understanding of the nature of the economic and political system. It therefore comes to be imbued with a more thorough revolutionary outlook than any other class. Its position is one of consistent and obvious exploitation. The poverty of the peasantry however is not always obviously due to the exploitation of other classes. It may appear to be due as much to the general parsimony of nature or to some particular natural catastrophe. The individual of the peasant class may hope to a certain extent by hard work and good fortune to rise to a position of comfort. Such prospects for the workers are comparatively slight. All these considerations go to show that the consciousness, understanding and revolutionary determination of the working-class must be superior to those of the peasantry.

Finally, the working class is placed in such a position in control of strategic points, the big towns, the decisive parts of the productive system, the transport and lines of communication etc. of society that the force of its attack is immensely greater than the relative weight of its numbers.

The peasantry has existed as a class for many centuries, and since the days of Jack Cade and John Ball has from time to time risen in revolution against its oppressors. But its revolutionary movement has never been successful. In the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution, it succeeded, because in both cases it was led by another revolutionary class, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat respectively, which concentrated on the political achievements of the revolution, leaving the peasantry to its own concern, the land. In the 'green revolution' in Eastern Europe after the war, the peasantry has achieved in some countries a partial success, by allying with the bourgeoisie against the landowners on the one hand and the working-class on the other. As would be expected in such circumstances, the success of the peasantry has been only partial and temporary. The bourgeoisie having crushed the working-class with the aid of the peasant

armies, and secured its political power, has begun to re-establish landlordism.

In India at the present day the difference between the two classes is to be seen. Though backward the organisation of the working-class is far in advance of that of the peasantry, as are also its political experience and consciousness. The working-class is becoming rapidly an active and conscious revolutionary class. The peasantry indulges spasmodically in local insurrectionary movements, but as a whole it is still only potentially revolutionary.

The working-class in India, in the sense of an organisable active force, apart from the agricultural proletariat, numbers some five millions. It is a small class compared with the peasantry. But the working-class in China, which has played and is playing a definitely leading part in the revolution, is relatively and absolutely smaller than the Indian working-class. Even the number of the Russian working-class was at the time of the revolution a relatively small fraction of that of the peasantry.

We conclude therefore that the working-class can and will be the leading class in the Indian revolution. While the peasantry will establish for the revolution the indispensable base in the country by seizing the land and overthrowing the feudal-capitalist system of exploitation in operation there, the working-class, assisted by auxiliaries from various sections of the town poor, artisans and the petty bourgeoisie, will conduct the decisive attack upon the centres of the State power, and will be principally concerned in establishing the new State and the new order. The working-class and the working-class party will be the deciding and directing force.

### **The Programme of the National Revolution**

We have said that the Indian revolution must be essentially a bourgeois democratic revolution, modified by the conditions of a colonial country. This is the case, although we have also concluded that the classes which will carry through the revolution are the working-class and the peasantry, supported by the petty bourgeoisie, and although the bourgeoisie will inevitably oppose the revolution.



The Prosecution and the Magistrate have stated repeatedly that we aimed immediately at setting up "a workers' republic on Soviet Lines" (Committal Order, page 7), or aimed immediately at the Dictatorship of Proletariat (Committal Order, page 88). That is, we are said to look upon the Indian revolution as being not confined to the bourgeois democratic stage but as going immediately beyond it to the socialist revolution, as was the case in Russia (though even there only after an interval of some nine months).

That is not our conception. The colonial Thesis of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International shows this clearly. Section 34 of this Thesis says: "The basic task of the Indian Communist consists in struggle against British Imperialism for emancipation of the country, for the destruction of all relics of feudalism, for the agrarian revolution, and for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in the form of a Soviet Republic." This is not a socialist programme, nor the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Prosecution have relied upon the phrase the "Moscow road" (taken from Mr. Norman Angell's well-known book mentioned by Mr Brailsford in his evidence here) to show that we aimed at the dictatorship of the proletariat immediately. Reference to the article in which this occurs [P. 526 (25)] will show that it is meant merely in the sense of breaking away from the system of Imperialism and establishing workers' and peasants' rule which may then lead on without further violent upheaval towards Socialism.

The essential condition for the proletarian revolution and the setting up of a socialist society is the existence of a sufficiently developed industry as a basis. We do not consider that the growth of large scale industry in India is sufficient to serve as the basis for the immediate transition to socialist organisation. As we have pointed out previously, Indian industry is not only backward, it is ill-balanced, owing to the fact that it has been developed primarily as a subsidiary to British economy, and not primarily to serve the needs of the Indian people. The great bulk of the manufactured goods consumed in India even in present conditions are imported.

Most important of all the means of production are not manufactured in India at all, and even accessories for industry, transport and agriculture are produced only to a small extent.

Further the actual strength of the working-class, in consequence of this position, insufficient to enable it to undertake immediately the immense task of instituting the dictatorship of the proletariat and carrying on at once the struggle for Socialism.

Consequently, the immediate conquest of the evolution will be confined to those briefly enumerated already. It will be in essence a typical bourgeois democratic revolution, achieving at the same time independence from Imperialist rule and establishing, not the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie but the rule of the masses. The instruments of economic power, the transport system, railways, docks etc., the banks and financial concerns etc. at present in the hands of the Imperialist bourgeoisie will be nationalised and the foreign debts and other obligations will be repudiated. In view of the inevitably hostile attitude of the bourgeoisie, the principal industries at present under Capitalist control, whether foreign or Indian must be nationalised without compensation. Likewise all foreign trade will be nationalised. The smaller industrial and trade organisations, handicrafts, small retail businesses etc. will be allowed to work under their present ownership with strict control against the excessive exploitation of the workers, and swindling of the public. The elementary demands of the workers—a legal minimum wage, the 8-hour day and 5½ day week, special insurance such as provision for employment, old age, sickness, etc., proper compensation and labour protection laws and the like, will be enforced. The land will be nationalised, the landowners expropriated without compensation and security of tenure given to all actual cultivators. Land revenue will be assessed on a sliding scale on the basis of production. An income-tax, graded, on all large incomes will be enforced. Agricultural debts will be cancelled or reduced; the rate of interest legally limited to a reasonable figure; State-aided sources of credit will be made available; all under the direction of the village and district peasant councils. At this time the agrarian revolution will take only the first step, just as the revolution generally is of the bourgeois

democratic type. The second step of the agrarian revolution in which the poor peasants and agricultural labourers overthrow the leadership, and divide the land, of the richer Capitalist peasants, will not take place generally, though in certain circumstance and places the relation of class forces may lead at once to this further stage.

A popular workers' and peasants' army will be created, and the prohibition on the carrying of arms by the masses reversed. Measures to secure a rapid advance of education, to improve the general state of sanitation, health and housing, the emancipation of women, and the "depressed" sections of the population, and the other minimum social needs of the masses, will be set in motion, the different races and communities of the country will be harmonised by a system of federation, with cultural and administrative autonomy for all regions and substantial minorities, so far as they are found to desire it; generally a policy of advancing the industry and means of communication of the country and developing its natural resources under State control, will be put in force, as the only means of guaranteeing a rising standard of life for the population.

The State which will be set up will be democratic, participated in by all except those who definitely support the counter-revolution. Freedom of association and discussion will be instituted for the masses for the first time in the history of the country. In short, the programme outlined in the publications of Workers' and Peasants' Party (P. 523): "Call to Action" (Appendix) will be put in force. The leading classes in the revolution, the workers and peasants will naturally exercise a decisive influence on the course of policy and development. It will be a "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants". The form of the State will not be parliamentary on the usual model. Such a type of "representative" machinery can only lead to the reassertion of the interests of the bourgeoisie, and hence to complete counter-revolution. The organisation of the State must be based on the organs of the masses, councils of the workers in the factories, docks, mines, railway centres, etc. of the peasants in the villages; of the working-class housewives, the small traders, the handicraft workers, etc., by occupational groups in their localities, that is to say it will be a Soviet system.

**Progress towards Socialism**

The difficulties of this regime will obviously be great. Even the relatively advanced working-class of Russia had and still has to wage a tremendous struggle to carry through its programme. The numerically and culturally weaker working-class of India will be faced with a task of enormous difficulty. In a backward country, starting with a relatively undeveloped and ill-balanced industry, and a huge individualist peasant population, will the workers' and peasants' dictatorship be able to defeat the efforts of Capitalism to recover its political dominance and progress successfully towards Socialism? That will be its fundamental problem.

We believe that the situation of the world today creates conditions which make possible the successful "growing over" to Socialism.

It must be remembered that this period of history is that in which the capitalist system generally is decaying. Though it is still enormously powerful, it has passed its zenith. Every year sees its difficulties and internal divisions increase. Time is on the side of the Indian workers' and peasants' dictatorship. On the other hand as Capitalism weakens, the Socialist stronghold of the working-class in the U.S.S.R. goes on from year to year steadily and rapidly strengthening.

The U.S.S.R. though its population is only half that of India, has been able to hold out, alone, against the capitalist world because of the internal weaknesses of Capitalism, and because the working-class in the capitalist countries has rallied to its support at decisive moments. With the support therefore of the U.S.S.R. and of the revolution in the capitalist world, the Workers' and Peasants' Republic of India will also be able to hold out.

The Workers' and Peasants' Republic of India will not be a Socialist Republic. But its policy will be to develop industry on a non-capitalist basis so that it may become a Socialist State as soon as possible. The objective possibility of this will be denied by those who believe that each country must pass through each stage in its development in the proper order, and that before Socialism can be established, it must become a fully developed capitalist country. It is such a formal and rigid conception which

led to the denial by many socialists of the possibility of the proletarian revolution in Russia. That revolution and the successful construction of Socialism in Russia have proved the possibility of this kind of partial reversal of the order of progress. D/- 7.1.32

Though India is admittedly too backward to be able to carry through this non-capitalist development towards Socialism independently, the theoretical possibility of such a development is not excluded, and the existence of the U.S.S.R. provides the conditions which render it not merely a theoretical but a practical possibility. As the practical support of the U.S.S.R. and the revolutionary working-class in the Imperialist countries will help to safeguard the Workers' and Peasants' Republic of India against the armed intervention of the bourgeoisie, so the economic support of the U.S.S.R. will safeguard India against the economic onslaught of Capitalism. With the help of the advanced socialist industry of the U.S.S.R. the Workers' and Peasants' Republic of India will be able to industrialise itself rapidly, and hence to increase the numerical and cultural strength of its working-class and to check and eventually defeat the growth of Capitalism. With the growth in industry and the strength of the working-class, the possibilities increase of influencing the whole economy in a socialist direction. Eventually under the leadership of the workers, the poorer peasants and the landless labourers can overcome the resistance of the capitalist elements, the moneylenders and the rich peasants, and set about the socialisation of agriculture, the organisation of large-scale farms cultivated in common by up-to-date technical methods. The rapid growth of industrial production will solve the problem of increasing substantially and progressively the income and standard of life of the people and securing them full emancipation from the evils of the past.

It is roughly in this way that we conceive the future development of India.

In order however not to leave the discussion of this part of the subject seriously incomplete, we have to admit the theoretical possibility of a somewhat different course. Owing to the

weakness of the Indian working-class it is conceivable, that during the national revolution, circumstances may determine that the effective leadership will not be definitely in its hands, but rather in those of some section of the petty bourgeoisie. This would involve at the worst the rapid collapse of the revolution, after the pattern of the Wuhan interlude in the Chinese revolution, owing to the inherent feebleness of the petty bourgeoisie, the accession to power through their instrumentality of the bourgeoisie, and hence of Imperialism and complete counter-revolution. At the best it would involve that, while the fundamental nature of the revolution, its National Democratic character, would be unaltered, a number of progressive achievements, which would be attained under the leadership of the working-class, would not be effected. In particular the line of development subsequent to the revolution would not be a non-capitalist development towards Socialism, but a capitalist development to the establishment of the rule of the bourgeoisie, with its concomitants of exploitation, agrarian reaction, growing class-struggle, and eventually proletarian revolution.

We are concerned at the present stage, however, primarily with the achievement of the national revolution, probably and preferably in the form we have indicated—of the Democratic Dictatorship of the workers and peasants—but anyhow in whatever form, that essential step must be taken.

We have said that we consider this a theoretical possibility only. That is our view. The petty bourgeois form of the national revolution is extremely unlikely. But the success of the workers and peasants depends upon a number of factors, of which not the least is the subjective preparedness of the working-class leadership, the Communist Party of India, its strength, its revolutionary determination, and its contact with the masses of the workers, peasants and other revolutionary classes. Unless the working-class succeeds quickly in organising a strong Communist Party which will be able to undertake the leadership of the revolution in the extremely complicated conditions of India, it will not be able to fulfil its task. We are confident however that in spite of the efforts of the Imperialist State, aided

by the sabotage of the Indian bourgeoisie and their ideologists, the working-class will succeed in this and will lead the national revolution to the establishment of the dictatorship of the workers and peasants, and eventually to Socialism.

### **The State in the Revolution**

The essential problem in any revolution is the seizure of power. At present Imperialism is in control of the State. The fundamental task of the revolution is the dispossession of Imperialism of its State power, and the establishment of the State power of the workers and peasants.

As the Prosecution have very correctly emphasised, this cannot mean that the workers and peasants can merely take over the existing State machine. The State must be smashed and replaced by an entirely new State.

The reasons for this have been dealt with by Lenin exhaustively. He points out that the State is always the organ of a ruling class. Its type of organisation is suited to the needs of that class. Its personnel is faithful to that class and its upper ranks consist of members of that class.

We have shown that the State in India is such an organisation as this. It is definitely and unquestionably the organ of the ruling class, the British bourgeoisie. Its structure is suited to the position of the British bourgeoisie in India. They are a small foreign minority in a land which they exploit to the limits of economic possibility. Consequently their State must be an absolutist one, highly centralised, resting on a perfected system of Police and spies to hunt out the germs of sedition before they can reach the point of action, and on superior force and mobility to crush opposition if it succeeds in rising to the level of open revolt. Lastly its personnel consists in its upper ranks of members of the British bourgeoisie and in its lower ranks of Indians who owing to their class affiliation or personal interests can be trusted within limits to be loyal to them.

It is obvious that for both these reasons the existing State machine will be quite useless for the workers and peasants. Their State machine must rest not on the superior power of a small

exploiting minority but on the support of the masses, the rank and file of the workers and peasants. And it must consist in regard to personnel not of members even of the Indian upper classes, who will hate the workers' and peasants' power, but of members of those classes themselves. It must be as we have stated, instead of an autocratic bourgeois dictatorship, a democratic popular Soviet Republic.

The establishment of this State will clearly necessitate the "smashing" of the present State—the removal of its officials, the dismissal of its Police force, the exposure of its spies and secret agents and the disbanding of its army. As has been done in the U.S.S.R., some officials etc. of the army and other services who possess special and necessary technical knowledge and are willing to place it at the disposal of the new order, may be taken over. But the machinery as a whole must undoubtedly be destroyed from top to bottom before the new order can be established.

We then come to the new order, the Dictatorship of the workers and peasants, which we have stated will organise itself in the form of Soviets. The Prosecution will of course take fright at once at this Bolshevik work and its introduction into India. But the Soviet is a universal phenomenon at a certain stage of the class-struggle of the workers and peasants, as the experience of many countries has shown. It may be that as Russia is the first country of the successful workers' and peasants' revolution, the Russian name may cling to this body, even in other countries. In any case, whether the name is adopted or not, the organisational form will inevitably be adopted.

The germ from which the Soviet arises is to be found in the general strike committee of the workers, which draws its representatives from all the factory and shop committees of a town. The Strike Committee is the supreme organ of struggle of the working-class. During the period of acute revolutionary struggle the Strike Committee transforms itself into a workers' Soviet, which after the capture of power becomes an organ of power, in conjunction with the peasants' and soldiers' Soviets, which are also modelled on the Strike Committees. The Soviet of



the workers, peasants and soldiers is thus the organ of the Democratic Dictatorship of the workers and peasants. Soviets, being based on units of production, and being the elective bodies of the toilers themselves, alone are in a position to guarantee true democracy to the masses.

We have said that the national revolution in India will have to be carried out against the bourgeoisie and under the leadership of the proletariat. The immediate objective towards which the party of the proletariat has to work is the General Strike of workers supported by a general no-tax and no-rent campaign, which will as it develops lead to an armed revolution. If this revolution is to succeed, i.e. if it is to perform its bourgeois democratic tasks, the overthrow of Imperialism, the abolition of landlordism etc., it must fight not only Imperialism and the landlord class but the bourgeoisie as well. That is, it must be, as Kuusinen has pointed out in his concluding speech in the debate on the Colonial Thesis (P 1204, P. 1520), "a Soviet revolution, i.e. a class revolution of the workers and peasants." The Strike Committees and Peasant Committees will develop into Soviets of the workers and peasants, as the national revolutionary struggle assumes an acute form, and will then pass over into organs of power.

Soviets as the form are often confused with the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as the class content of the State power. The Soviets can also be the organs of the Democratic Dictatorship of the workers and peasants. When we say that the State in India after the victory of the national revolution will be in the form of a Soviet Republic, we do not mean that it will be identical with the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Soviet State however, i.e. the Democratic State of the workers and peasants, is the only type of State which will be able completely to perform all the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The Soviet power alone will be able to guarantee and consolidate the victory over Imperialism and feudalism. Further the Soviet State is the only State form suited to the "growing over" of the national revolution into the social revolution. The Colonial Thesis recounts the basic general task of the colonial revolution in the following order. [Para 16 (a)].

"The emancipation of the country from the yoke of Imperialism (nationalisation of foreign concessions, railways, banks, etc ) and the establishment of the national unity of the country where this has not been attained, overthrow of the exploiting classes at the back of which Imperialism stands, organisation of Soviets of workers and peasants, establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and peasantry, consolidation of the hegemony of the Proletariat "

For the "consolidation of the hegemony of the Proletariat", and the peaceful transition or, "growing over" to Socialism, the Soviet form of State is essential

The new order in India will then be the Democratic Dictatorship of the workers and peasants, organised through Soviets. We emphasise the term "Democratic". The Prosecution, unable to understand that any State organisation can possibly depend upon popular support, have assumed that it will be 'a dictatorship of an individual' or of a 'small and compact little body of men ". We can understand the incredulity of the Prosecution, but we assure them that we mean what we say

We contend that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat or of the proletariat and peasantry, exercised through the Soviets, is a more democratic system than any other system of Government yet established, more democratic in particular than so called Parliamentary Democracy. R. P. Dutt says, (P. 314 "The Two Internationals," Page 79) "Bourgeois democracy with its Parliamentary system uses words to induce belief in popular participation in Government. Actually the masses and their organisations are held far out of the reach of the real power and the real State administration. Bourgeois democracy and the Parliamentary system sharpen the separation of the masses from the State by division of the Government into legislative and executive powers and through Parliamentary mandates beyond popular recall.

One contrasts bourgeois democracy with the Soviet system which "unites the masses with the organs of Government by a right of recall, amalgamation of legislative and executive powers and by use of working boards. Above all this union is fostered by the fact that in the Soviet system elections are based not on arbitrary territorial districts but on units of production. In

this way the Soviet system brings true Proletariat democracy, democracy by and for the proletarians, against the bourgeoisie." The Soviet system is a higher form of State power than the Parliamentary one and a more democratic one, because instead of giving power to the minority of exploiters, it gives power to the great majority, the exploited.

One further point is necessary in connection with the nature and historical role of the institution known as the Soviet, or Workers' and Peasants' Council. There has been a tendency to associate the traditional, supposedly democratic administration of the people found in India, the Panchayat, especially the village Panchayat, with the Soviet, and to declare that they amount to the same thing. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the first place, as we have just shown, the Soviets arise only in certain historical circumstances. Only when the class-struggle of the masses has reached a point of such depth and intensity that the seizure of power can be considered as a practical possibility, do the masses begin to develop the Strike Committees and Peasant Committees into Soviets. The Soviets are the organs of revolutionary struggle and revolutionary State power of the masses. Organisations even of similar structure to the Soviets cannot be called Soviets, if they do not perform this historical function. But secondly the forms of organisation of the Soviets and the Panchayats are totally different. The Soviet even after the revolution, when it has become part of the organisation of the State, is formed on a class basis. The Panchayat on the other hand has a caste basis. The village Soviet is elected in a general meeting of all the village population, except the exploiters. The Panchayat is appointed by the separate castes of the village, which usually, in accordance with tradition, appoint the most influential and therefore richest members of their caste. The Panchayat therefore becomes an organisation of the village exploiters, an organ of power for the oppressors.

It is therefore quite comprehensible that the bourgeoisie should include in their programme the organisation of the villages and revival or strengthening of the Panchayats. (The Congress often advocates this, but it is put forward most definitely in the

constitution sponsored by Dr. Besant. Recently, instances have come to notice that Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in his propaganda speeches generally says that the next Government in India will be a "Panchayati Raj"). The bourgeoisie are right from their class point of view. But they cannot represent this as a progressive step or a democratic step. It is no more democratic than Parliament, to which indeed it is somewhat similar. They are both devices which under the form of democracy secure power for the exploiting classes.

The Soviets however, as we have said, are a democratic form of Government and State organisation. By their mode of origin, their historical function and their structure, they necessarily represent a democratic form, and indeed the highest type of democratic structure which has yet come into existence. This is not mere theory. We have quoted some evidence to show that the regime in the U.S.S.R., which describes itself as the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," is in form more democratic, even for the peasantry, than the so-called democracy of the West European and American Capitalist States. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers and peasants really order their lives through the Soviet machinery in a democratic way.

Similarly we have shown that the leadership of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union consists in finding out and interpreting the desires and needs of the masses, and seeing that they are put into effect in an organised and systematic way. The Soviet system and the system of Party leadership result in a combination of centralisation and efficiency with practical flexibility and democracy such as has certainly never been found under any other regime.

The order which the workers and peasants under the leadership of the Communist Party of India will establish in India will be no less democratic and no less dependent on the real consent and co-operation of the masses. There will be no "clique", no "compact little body of men", which will dictate as Imperialism dictates now. There will be a popular mass party, which will exercise leadership, which will point out the way and will get the hearty co-operation and support of the masses in pursuing that way.

### **The Workers' and Peasants' Party, the Party of the National Revolution**

The policy of carrying through the national democratic revolution will be conducted, as we have shown, by an United Front of three main classes, the working-class, the peasants and that miscellaneous group which we call the petty bourgeoisie. In the period when we were working in the movement, we conceived of the Workers' and Peasants' Party as the organisational form of that United Front. Its publications show that it regarded itself as a party representing these three classes and that its policy was essentially the attainment of the national democratic revolution. It did not aim immediately at the dictatorship of the proletariat, nor did it put forward Socialism as part of its programme. The propaganda of its individual members may at times have mentioned these things as ultimately to be attained, but its policy and programme as such demanded only independence and democracy and described only the way to get them by carrying through the national revolution. We have outlined already the programme of the national democratic revolution, and shown that it coincides with that of the W.P.P. The constitution of the W.P.P. of Bengal (P. 523 "Call to Action") states that the aim of the Party is: "The attainment of complete Independence from British Imperialism and thorough democratisation of India, based on economic and social emancipation and political freedom of men and women."

That is, shortly put, the programme of the national democratic revolution, as we have described it. P 1017, which is the original statement of the aims and policy of the 'Workers' and 'Peasants' Party of Bombay, clearly states that its policy is the attainment of Independence, and the demands formulated in it contain no socialist items. P 1013, "What the W.P.P. stands for", says the same thing. P 138, "The Principles and Policy of the W.P.P.", states that the function of the Party "in the most general terms is to achieve at least the essential preliminary step, that is the attainment of political Independence, for the abolition of exploitation and political oppression."

And at the end it speaks of "the building up of a new independent and democratic order", as the task after revolution. These all bear out the essentially national democratic character of the W.P.P. and its programme. The W.P.P. was an Independence Party.

The Prosecution however have urged—and the Magistrate of course has supported them—that the W.P.P. was really a Communist Party, or was a “veiled Communist Party.” We do not deny that a number of us were members of the W.P.P. But that does not mean that the Party was a Communist Party. The Communist Party has its programme, the attainment of Socialism through the revolutionary overthrow of Capitalism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The W.P.P. has its programme, the attainment of Independence and generally the aims of the national democratic revolution. The two are not the same. Communists could join the W.P.P. because they agreed with its programme so far as it went. The C.P. also works for the attainment of National Independence and the achievement of the task of the national democratic revolution, since in Indian conditions these are the essential steps towards the fulfilment of its programme.

This kind of argument would show that any Trade Union, for example, of which a Communist was a member, was a Communist Party, or that the Indian National Congress was a Communist Party (because several of us were members of it) We repeat that the W.P.P. was not a Communist Party; it was the Party of Independence and of the national democratic revolution, and nothing more.

### **The Communists and the Nationalists**

Connected with this misrepresentation of the nature and policy of the W.P.P. goes a misrepresentation of our policy, and incidentally of that of the Indian bourgeois nationalist leaders. The Prosecution begin by making such an astonishing statement as this: “The revolution that these accused have visualised is not a national revolution. It is an anti-national revolution.....the quarrel which these accused have with all these gentlemen who are generally looked upon as the leaders of nationalist thought in India.....is that their ideology is all wrong. They are striving or at present are accredited with striving for Independence in India. That is a hopelessly wrong ideology according to these accused.” The Magistrate, although it is clear that he sees through this, dutifully chimes in: “Nothing can be clearer than that

the Nationalists and Communists have nothing in common and their real aims are diametrically opposed." (Committal Order, page 71).

The revolution for which we were striving, as we have just explained at some length, and for which the W.P.P. stood, as its publications show, was the national revolution. We want the freedom of India from British Imperialism, and, as we have explained again and again, we could work on the basis of a "united front" with any others who stand for Independence, or even with people who pretend to stand for independence, but do not mean it, such as the leaders of the ill-fated and short-lived Independence League. (See the "Political Resolution". P 56, which makes the offer of a united front to this body.) It is a case of sheer misrepresentation to state that the revolution for which we are striving is anti-national.

As for the next point, there is no doubt that on questions of policy we are strongly opposed to all the gentlemen whom the Prosecution named—Messrs Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose etc. But the reason why we oppose them is that we stand for national revolution and they do not. All our propaganda and publications contain this theme, that these leaders of "nationalism" are not leaders of the national revolution but leaders of a national reformist movement. They are not "striving for Independence in India" as the Prosecution say of them. In fact that is our complaint against them. They are striving for Dominion Status in India, or something even less than Dominion Status. They want a compromise with Imperialism in accordance with the interests of the bourgeoisie, as we have just explained. They want a compromise with Imperialism, we are against a compromise with Imperialism, but on the contrary want to overthrow it. We are therefore entitled to ask, which are the better nationalists, we or they? This is the difference between these gentlemen and ourselves, and it is again a downright perversion of the obvious facts which the Prosecution have indulged in.

But it is necessary to state the matter generally. The Prosecution have insinuated that we as Communists cannot sincerely work for national freedom and the national revolution. We are, in their

view, out to "use.....the nationalist movement for the moment in evidence" for our own sinister purpose, that of attaining Socialism. We are not nationalist, we are "internationalist" that is, "anti-nationalist."

We have not disguised the fact that we are Communists and therefore internationalist, and that we work for the establishment ultimately of a worldwide all-inclusive federation without oppressors or oppressed, in which nationalism will have no place. But in the present stage in India or any oppressed country, we regard the movement for national freedom as a progressive force. We look upon the national revolution in India or China, or anywhere else, as an enormous forward step, and we work for it quite sincerely. We are ready as we have said, to work with anybody else, even if it be a bourgeois organisation, if it is pursuing a genuine national revolutionary policy and will give us freedom to conduct our own propaganda and organisation. On these conditions the Chinese Communist Party worked for years within the Kuomintang which also included the national bourgeoisie of China. That the Chinese Communist Party committed certain tactical mistakes in its relations with the Kuomintang, does not alter the fact is participation in the Kuomintang at that period was in principle correct, just as its separation from Kuomintang was correct in 1927 when that body became instead of a revolutionary a counter-revolutionary force.

The situation in India is somewhat different from that in China. Here we are convinced, as a result of an economic study which we have already sketched, and as a result of political experience, that the bourgeoisie is incapable of playing even the revolutionary part which the Chinese bourgeoisie did. Its position is no more than one of opposition, peaceful and non-violent opposition to Imperialism, but ultimately violent opposition to revolution. Hence our tactics in relation to the bourgeois reformists are not those of alliance but of criticism and opposition. But this line we take not in the interest of any ulterior policy but in the interest of the national revolution.

We claim that Communists can take part in the national revolution. We go further and say that the Communist Party of



India will play a leading part in the national revolution. We have declared that we believe that the working-class will be the leading class in the national revolution. It follows that the working-class party, the Communist Party, will play a part of great importance as the leading and organising force in the national revolution, just as the Communist Parties of China, of Indonesia, of Korea, and other colonies are doing.

Our simultaneous support of nationalism and internationalism involves no contradiction. The ultimate equalitarian federal union of free peoples' States at which we aim cannot be attained on the basis of national oppression. It would be impossible, as the Social Democrats profess to think, for any Empire to pass directly into the union. The first step is that such a national unit must attain freedom. It can then enter the union freely on an equal basis. From this point of view then the attainment of freedom from Imperialist oppression is a step forward towards Internationalism. And as we have shown the national revolution means an essential advance not only in this respect but in many others also. Hence we support it.

We should also make clear the difference between the nationalism of an oppressed people and that of an independent state, and why while supporting the one we oppose the other. We have stated that nationalism is characteristically a bourgeois conception. It arose first definitely in the period when the bourgeoisie was rising against feudalism and fighting for control of society. In that period it was a progressive conception. It involved an attack upon the division of the population and the land into innumerable petty principalities and its unity into relatively large national aggregations—a progressive step necessary in the interest of the advance of production and trade.

Round these national centres the traditions and interests of the bourgeoisie have gathered and have now become inseparably connected with the existence of nationalism. The objective conditions drive more and more incessantly towards a worldwide organisation of economic and political life. The bourgeoisie extends its interest all over the earth, and founds international trusts, the League of Nations, the Pan American Union, the

International Telegraph and Postal Union etc., but it cannot give up nationalism and the national State which protects it. The proletariat, on the other hand, can do so, and almost nothing in the ideology of the working-class is so alien and offensive to the bourgeoisie as its indifference to the sacred principle of nationalism.

Nationalism in this sense has obviously lost all progressive significance, and has become a purely reactionary force. It has now fused with Imperialism, and means the invasion and oppression of other peoples, the maintenance of armaments, and war. It is the principal ideological means whereby Capitalism rallies the working-class to support of those policies, which are opposed to its real interests, and is therefore one of the forces most potent for destruction and reaction at work in the world today.

### **British Workers and the Indian Revolution**

The question of our attitude towards nationalism is brought to the front especially in this case by the presence among the accused of British Communists. The Prosecution have wisely resisted the temptation to accuse these comrades of "interfering" in Indian matters which are not their business. But so much cannot be said for the representatives of the Government in the Legislative Assembly. During the debates on the Public Safety Bill for example Government spokesmen, especially Sir Denys Bray, expressed great indignation that British Communists should venture to dabble in Indian affairs which do not concern them. It is surely very dangerous for representatives of Imperialism to set up any such abstract principle of nationalism, which they themselves necessarily violate continually and which can be used against them with deadly effect.

As Communists we recognise no such national limitation. All Communists are the enemies of all Imperialist Governments equally. But British Communists as members of the British working-class movement have a special interest and concern in assisting in the destruction of British Imperialist control of India. The British Trades Union Congress in 1927 (see Report)

discussed the question of the low standards of Indian working-class wages etc., and the absence of effective limits to their exploitation, in their effect upon the British working-class. The opinion was universally expressed that this had a most destructive effect upon British working-class standards. Miners, textile workers, jute workers, were all being threatened with reductions because of the competition of low paid labour in India. The jute workers especially had suffered from this for many years. As a result of the discussion, the Congress decided to send out a delegation to study the matter and Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth were duly sent. They produced a valuable report on Indian Labour conditions, and did their best to persuade the unions in India to affiliate to the International Federation of Trade Unions and to adopt other reactionary measures. Later British Trade Unions have begun assisting, on a larger scale than before, various Indian reformist Labour leaders with funds.

British Communists also realise that the low standards of the Indian workers are a menace to the British workers. In fact the Communists had been raising the question at the Trades Union Congress for some years before it was taken up by the reformist leaders. But their attitude to the matter is different from that of the reformists. They believe that the Indian workers will not be helped by the grant of funds to Indian reformists. They believe that the only way to help Indian workers to get higher standards, and incidentally to help the British workers also, is by assisting them to build up a militant working-class movement, both trade union and political, which will lead the struggle for the overthrow of British Imperialist control of India.

They are confirmed in their policy by another and even more important consideration. They see the Indian revolutionary movement, including the workers' movement, struggling for the overthrow of the British Government. They are members of a movement, the working-class movement in Britain, which is also struggling for the overthrow of the British Government. They see the great importance to British Imperialism of its control of India. They conclude that the effectiveness of their own struggle will be greatly increased if they co-ordinate these movements and assist

in the attack upon the common enemy at another and more vulnerable front, India.

They look upon the two movements as parts of one great world-wide movement against Imperialism, and they consider that it is right and reasonable for one section of the attack upon Imperialism to assist another section; for the revolutionary British working-class to assist the revolutionary movement for independence in India.

It is worthwhile here to deal briefly with an objection that is often raised against the alliance of the British revolutionary working-class and the revolutionary movement for independence in India. Lord Rothermere for example claims that 20 per cent of the British national income is derived from India, and that if India attains independence the British workers will suffer more than anybody else from the loss of this. Now according to the Liberal Industrial Inquiry (Report, page 426) the British national income is estimated at £ 4,000 millions per annum. We have shown that the contribution from India can be estimated (it is admittedly a cautious estimate however) at £ 120 millions per annum, i.e. 3 per cent. If we make a generous allowance for underestimation, and increase it to 5 per cent, and a generous allowance for the probable repercussions of the Indian revolution upon other colonies—we have remarked that India holds the key to the whole Eastern Colonial Empire of Britain—we can assign a total at the most of 7 or 8 per cent as the loss to the British national income directly and indirectly due to the Indian national revolution. This is substantial no doubt, and we have no wish to deny that the loss to the British bourgeoisie would be extremely heavy. But it must be remembered that this loss will fall in the first place not even mainly upon the industrial bourgeoisie, but upon the 'rentiers' and the like. Their loss will affect the working-class only indirectly and to a small extent (through the loss to the luxury trades etc.).

The possible contraction in certain branches of trade (it should be remembered however that the boycott of British goods has already in this stage effected this contraction) will be more than compensated for by the benefit to the British working-class of the

rising standards of the Indian workers, when Imperialist exploitation is removed, and by the increased market for industrial goods which would result from a rising standard of life in India generally, and a policy of development of Indian national industry. Considering the matter merely on this level therefore and this highly abstract manner, we must conclude that it is probable that the British working-class would not lose but would gain on balance from the success of the Indian national revolution.

### **The League against Imperialism**

The consciousness of the unity of interest in the anti-Imperialist struggle of these two main revolutionary forces, has developed a special form only recently, with the rapid growth in the colonial revolutionary movement. The international character of the revolutionary Labour movement has been recognised since early in the last century, and it took its first definite form in the establishment of the Communist League in 1847. Especially since the foundation of the Communist International in 1919, the further conception of the necessity of unity among the various sections of the revolutionary nationalist movement and between it and the revolutionary working-class movement, has been emphasised. At the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, a resolution was passed on this subject laying down the general lines of Communist policy on the question (P 2395). But it was only in 1926 or 1927 that this idea took organisational shape in the formation of the League against Imperialism. The principle of this League is the unity and co-ordination of the struggle against Imperialism by these two main forces which oppose it, the revolutionary working-class movement and the revolutionary movement for the emancipation of the colonies.

The Prosecution have proclaimed triumphantly that the League against Imperialism is a Communist organisation. They say, "It is a body which is definitely Communist and is doing the work of the Third International under the camouflage of being a wider body."

The Magistrate also has been pleased to exercise his gift for irony at the expense of this "peculiarly non-Communist body." The Prosecution have shown from time to time this strange idea about Communist influence and methods of work. Anything which a Communist or a Communist organisation does has for them a certain sinister and underhand implication. Other revolutionary and pseudo revolutionary bodies or individuals who joined the League against Imperialism are not accused of doing anything dishonest, of using a "camouflage" or of working through it. They are all innocent dupes who fall into the trap laid by the superhumanly astute Communists. This is ridiculous. The League against Imperialism is not a Communist body. It is a "wider" body including many organisations and persons who could not possibly join the Communists International or be considered Communists. It is of course a revolutionary body. Communists do not join or assist in the formation of organisations which have no revolutionary possibilities. The League against Imperialism exists for the purpose of promoting the colonial revolution against Imperialism. Its resolutions and publications show this.

Take for example the resolution passed at its first session in February, 1927, quoted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in this report to the All-India Congress Committee, page 9: "The Congress accords its warm support to the Indian national movement for the complete freedom of India and is of opinion that the liberation of India from foreign domination and all kinds of exploitation is an essential step in the full emancipation of the peoples of the world.

"This Congress trusts that the peoples and workers of other countries will fully co-operate in this task and will especially take effective steps to prevent the despatch of foreign troops to India and the retention of an army of occupation in that country.

"This Congress further trusts that the Indian national movement will base its programme on the full emancipation of the peasants and workers of India without which there can be no real freedom, and will co-operate with the movements for emancipation in other parts of the world."

So also the joint declaration of the Indian and Chinese delegations, part of which runs (pages 10-11): "British Imperialism, which in the past has kept us apart and done us so much injury, is now the very force that is uniting us in a common endeavour to overthrow it.

"We trust that the leaders of the Indian movement will do all in their power to co-ordinate their struggle with that of the Chinese people, so that by simultaneously engaging British Imperialism on two of its most vital fronts, China may receive active support in her present struggle and the final victory of both peoples may be secured."

Similarly the resolutions passed at the General Council of the League against Imperialism at Brussels, December 1927, give definite support to Complete Independence and revolution in the colonies. The first resolution (Report, page 3) states: "In this situation the task of the League is to intensify its activities with the object of mobilising in a worldwide resistance to the Imperialist offensive, all the revolutionary forces fighting for freedom and democracy in the oppressed colonial countries."

The League against Imperialism stands definitely for Complete Independence in the colonies, i.e. for revolution. It has never denied or attempted to obscure that fact.

Communists have played and do play a prominent part in it, and the Communist International generally approves of the line of its work and encourages and supports it. But to say that the Communist International does its work under the "camouflage" of the League against Imperialism is ridiculous. The Communists openly join the League against Imperialism, in order to get into touch with other organisations and persons which are (or like to pretend to be) supporters of the colonial revolutionary movement, such as the Syndicalists, "Left" Social Democrats and the like, and the national revolutionary and national reformist and Labour organisations in the colonies for the promotion of such part of their programme in regard to the colonial revolutionary movement as these bodies can agree to.

This can be seen from the facts in regard to the organisations and persons taking part in the League's activities. Consider

also the following from the "Report on the Development of the League against Imperialism" in the "Anti-Imperialist Review," page 85.

"P. J. Schmidt (of Holland), one of the most active and energetic of the younger left wing Socialists, rendered excellent service to the anti-Imperialist movement by building up the Dutch section of the League on a broad basis with the co-operation of Socialists, Communists, Syndicalists, anti-militarists, bourgeois-radicals, and national-revolutionary Indonesians."

The League against Imperialism is a "wider" body. Most of the sections here enumerated would be repudiated by Communists in relation to their policy in the Imperialist country, for there almost all, including the "Left" Social-Democrats, are not revolutionary. But in regard to the colonies, Social-Democrats, as Mr. Brailsford has told us, can in theory support revolution, if there is no effective machinery provided for constitutional advance. And even consistent bourgeois-radicals, who in theory must object to the rule of one country over another, may support the colonial revolution.

The League against Imperialism is therefore a genuine embodiment of the united anti-Imperialist front and Communists take part in it on the same terms as others, openly and professedly in order to further and carry out their programme of supporting the colonial revolution. It is some of the other bodies and individuals, who do not really support that policy, which is the policy of the League, who must be accused of dishonesty. If any are to be blamed for "working under the camouflage" of the League for purposes other than its true and avowed purpose, it is some of these; the Indian National Congress for example, or Messrs. Lansbury and others in England, who, though not revolutionary, joined this revolutionary body and thereby acquired a valuable reputation as supporters of the colonial revolution which they did not deserve. These have gone from the League. But others, sincere revolutionaries, such as Madam Sun Yat Sen, who are not Communists, remained in it, because it is not a "camouflage" body, but a body which is really trying to do genuine revolutionary work.



## **The Labour and Socialist International and the Colonial Revolution**

While dealing with the colonial revolution, it is necessary that we touch upon the attitude of the Socialist International towards it. The Prosecution have held up the Labour and Socialist International as a body which "holds rational feelings with regard to the Labour question." We presume that they approve equally of its "feelings" in regard to the colonial question.

The traditions of the Second International before the war (the Prosecution will be horrified to hear) were in favour of the complete freedom of the colonies. The question was never very thoroughly discussed in those days, as the colonial revolutionary movement had hardly begun to develop except in China. But the influence of genuine working-class instinct was still sufficiently strong in the International to make it automatically take up the correct attitude on the question, i.e. against Imperialism, for the independence of the colonies. It is well known that at the time of the Boer War, the Fabian society, then probably the most opportunist group within the Socialist movement, earned universal opprobrium among Socialists for its pro-Imperialist attitude. The attitude taken up towards India was in accordance with this feeling. Mr Ramsay MacDonald visited India some time before the war, and published a book "The Awakening of India," in which he subjected the Imperialist regime in India to severe condemnation. And he stated

"No race or nation can govern another justly." At the same time he made a public appeal in which he said

"Let Independence be granted" ('The New Leader')

We have shown how opportunism gradually corrupted the leading sections of the Second International, and that during the war and the post-war period this corruption has made tremendous strides. In all matters the policy of the Labour and Socialist International is now "rational" from the bourgeois point of view, that is one of complete subservience to Imperialism, and the colonial question is no exception. Nevertheless the old traditions still linger. The workers who support the Labour and Socialist International, out of old associations and discipline, find it hard

to stomach open betrayal. They must be deceived. Accordingly when the Labour and Socialist International held a full discussion on the colonial question at its Brussels Session in 1928, its leaders gave vent to much radical verbiage. They stated ["Colonial Resolution" D 145 (7)]: "Colonial policy has been one of the means of the expansion of Capitalism throughout the world.....; native races have been subjected to foreign brutal domination, to shameful exploitation and robbery by foreign capitalists. Socialism is opposed to the very principle of the foreign domination of colonial races...it therefore supports the efforts towards emancipation of those colonial races, who have fulfilled the basic conditions of modern independent civilisation, and claims on their behalf complete liberation from the foreign yoke."

The Prosecution will no doubt tremble; but they need have no fear. The resolution proceeds to demand: "Complete Independence and International Equality" for China; Complete Independence for Egypt, Iraq and Syria and "Full Self-Determination" for India. Even the desirability of bamboozling the working-class must not be allowed seriously to embarrass the British Labour Party in its dealings with India.

The behaviour of the Labour and Socialist International Conference to the colonial representatives present was in keeping with the nature of the resolution and discussion on the question. The colonial representatives were not allowed to speak or take part in the discussions, and were confined to the visitor's gallery. Diwan Chaman Lal, ex-M.L.A., who was present as a fraternal delegate from the All-India Trade Union Congress, therefore sent in an indignant written statement [D 145 (8) and (9)] in which he declared that the Labour and Socialist International policy with respect to India was dictated by the British Labour Party which had "Imperialist leanings." Some representatives from Indonesia and North Africa and from the Chinese Workers' Union in France and the Chinese Socialist Students' Union also sent in protests [D 145 (5)] which also condemn the reactionary nature of the decision on the colonial question.

These colonial delegates had ample cause for dissatisfaction. But the betrayal of Indian bourgeois nationalism by the British

Labour Party has been even greater than they could have expected. The Labour Party was bound by this decision in regard to India according to the discipline of the International. It is known, however that discipline is not very strong. But the Labour Party had committed itself to a support of bourgeois nationalism even more definitely than this. It had already before this accepted the "Commonwealth of India Bill" as its official policy. This Bill, which was drafted by prominent Indian Liberals, even if not exactly what the bulk of the bourgeois nationalists want, concedes most of their demands, responsible Government at the centre, the army only being reserved etc. (See D 537 "The Labour Party and the Empire" By L. Haden Guest, page 70 onwards).

But all this was when the Labour Party was not under the "sobering responsibility of office." Its policy in office is well known and was in full accord with the spirit if not the letter of the treacherous "colonial resolution" passed at the Brussels Congress. During the Labour Government in 1924 we had a foretaste of what Labour Imperialism means in relation to Indian nationalism, when the Bengal Ordinance was promulgated and some 200 men were imprisoned without trial. But the Labour Government of 1929-1931 surpassed its own record. The speciality of Social Democrats generally is fair words and foul deeds. The Labour Party carried out this tradition. It forgot even the Labour and Socialist International resolution. It forgot the "Commonwealth of India Bill," and its pledges, public and private, to the bourgeois nationalists. Even its words in office were not at first fair enough to deceive the Congress leaders into going to the R.T.C., while as for its deeds, they need no detailed study. It instituted a reign of terror in which 70,000 were imprisoned, thousands injured and scores killed, said to be the worst since the White Terror which followed the Indian Mutiny of 1857. It promulgated Martial Law and an unprecedented number of punitive ordinances. It pushed through the R.T.C. policy, in face of the opposition of the main body of bourgeois nationalists, with the obvious object of displaying the weakness and division of bourgeois nationalism to the world, and being able "round a table" with an appearance of fairness and liberality to defy its demands.

This is the treatment which it meted out to the bourgeois nationalists. The treatment of the labour movement is only distinguished by greater frankness.

In the summer of 1928, the Labour Party called a "Commonwealth Labour Conference," which various reformist Indian Labour leaders attended. The behaviour of the British Labour Party representatives was so reactionary that even these men walked out of the Conference and refused to take further part in it. Mr. C. F. Andrews, a member of the delegation, explained the matter. He says [D 145 (2)]: "The real reason was the blank refusal of the British delegates present to make any change in their attitude towards the Simon Commission."

But he proceeds: "We on our part as Indian delegates were fighting against Imperialism and against racialism. Those who were delegates to the same Conference were in their actions and deeds even if not in their stated words fighting really for Imperialism and racialism."

Mr. Andrews is an amiable and somewhat reactionary gentleman (he is now supporting the R.T.C.) whom the Labour Party could have deceived and won over with perfect ease if they had desired. Already before their accession to office they were committed to the policy of Imperialism (participation in the Simon Commission) which their Indian fellow reformists could not persuade them to abandon, and they seem to have made no attempts to conceal their contempt for their Indian "comrades."

Before this, in 1924, the Labour Party had shown its colours by launching and carrying through the Cawnpore "Bolshevik" Conspiracy case, and by permitting the forcible suppression of strikes. As in other matters it surpassed itself in 1929-1931. It attacked the Labour Movement, not only by continuing this case but in many other ways. It smashed the Bombay mill-workers' strike and the jute workers' strike of 1929 and the G.I.P. Railway workers' strike of 1930, victimising and imprisoning many of their leaders. It used Regulation III of 1818 and the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1930 against militant labour leaders. (We can cite the case of Fazal Elahi and others in the Punjab, imprisoned under Regulation III, and the case of many Trade Union leaders imprisoned under the Bengal Criminal Law

Amendment Act. The Home Member of the Government of Bengal gave a solemn promise to the Bengal Legislative Council on the occasion of the reenforcement of this Act in April 1930, that it would be used only against terrorists. None the less, a number of militant Trade Unionists who are certainly not terrorists are today in jail, of course without trial, under this Act.)

The attitude of the so-called "Left Wing" of the Social Democracy is in accordance with its usual line. The function of the Left Wing is to head the natural movement of revolt against the betrayal of the orthodox Social Democracy by a show of opposition, but to prevent this revolt going to the point of action, or of weakening the organisation of the Social Democratic Party. The Left Wing in the Labour Party has played its game in connection with the colonial movement, and has tried to deceive both the Indian bourgeois nationalists and the British workers. While there was still the possibility of doing so with some show of plausibility they assured the Indian national movement that the Labour Party, in spite of appearances, was sound at heart, and was desirous of making important concessions. Even up to the last minute, the "New Leader" while showing sympathy for the Civil Disobedience Movement seems to have urged its leaders to go to the R.T.C. Others have gone to the length of denouncing the R.T.C., so that the Indian bourgeois leaders may know that they still have friends in the Labour Party.

In relation to the British working-class, the same policy of sham opposition has been followed. The real attitude and policy of its Left Wing has been most clearly shown by their relations with the League against Imperialism. The branch of this League in Britain, to which many of the Left Labour Party leaders belong, proposed to wage a campaign in support of the Indian revolutionary movement, and therefore of necessity against the Labour Government, which was suppressing that movement and strengthening the police and military dictatorship of Imperialism over India. They refused to attack the Labour Government and left the League against Imperialism.

This Left Wing has also contributed to confuse the Indian situation in the eyes of the British workers in a way that can

only lead to the weakening rather than strengthening of the ties between the British working-class and the Indian revolution. Mr. Fenner Brockway in his "The Indian Crisis" (1930), makes such statements as the following: "In recent years the rank-and-file membership of the Congress has become much more articulate. Indeed under the influence of Jawahar Lal Nehru, the present Chairman, the Congress has increasingly become a proletarian movement. Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru is a socialist, and the growing influence of the industrial workers combined with that of the students (largely without posts) who are spreading socialist ideas has made the Congress more and more an organisation demanding not only political freedom but social and economic freedom as well." (pages 113-114).

This kind of propaganda misleads the British working-class about the situation in India, and leads them to think that the Civil Disobedience Movement is a mass movement aiming at Independence, instead of what it really is, a movement led by the bourgeoisie, into which they have dragged some workers and peasants, and aiming at some compromise with Imperialism. This will create misunderstanding as to the steps which the British workers ought to take in support of the Indian revolution, leading to the conclusion that all that is required is, that a compromise should be reached which is acceptable to the National Congress, and consequently that the "settlement" with the Congress which may come as a result of the R.T.C. or when the reforms are introduced, will be a solution of the question satisfactory to the masses. The result is that the British workers abandon all initiative in the matter and wait helplessly on the "conciliatory" policy of the Labour Government—which is what the Left Wing requires.

Finally the book shows what conception this "Left" has of a settlement of the Indian question. The author talks vaguely of "social revolution" in various places, but at the same time appeals to the British bourgeoisie to safeguard their interests in India by timely concessions: "If for a moment I may give a word of friendly advice to those who have capital invested in India, I would say this: the real danger to British investments in India lies not in a political revolution but in a social revolution. Everyday

that the satisfaction of India's political claim is postponed, increases the likelihood of a cataclysmic social revolution in India, involving the repudiation of Government loans and the confiscation of property..... Those who wish to safeguard their economic interests, would be well advised therefore to urge that reasonable terms be made with the first as soon as possible, in order that an atmosphere of reason may be created for the subsequent settlement of the second." (page 50).

And yet the author of this book and his like claim to be socialists, and not merely socialists but "Left-wingers."

The attitude of the British Trade Union Leaders is as reactionary and dangerous as that of the Labour Party. The policy of Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth while in India was under a show of verbal radicalism to persuade the Indian Trade Unions and Trade Union Congress to affiliate to the International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam) and to concentrate upon economic matters and leave politics alone. [See D 145 (30)]. British Trade Union leaders sat upon the Whitley Commission, which was appointed after a great wave of working-class activity in 1928 for the purpose of finding out means of suppressing this activity. As was to be expected, in view of the identity of the Chairman, they recommended schemes on the lines of the Whitley councils, which have been repeatedly condemned by the Trade Union Movement in Great Britain. The purpose of these councils is to tie down the workers by means of arbitration, conciliation machinery and sectional agreements, to prevent them getting any improvements of any value, and at the same time prevent the growth of the Trade Union Movement.

British Imperialism has shown its appreciation of the useful work of reformist Trade Unionism and the International Federation of Trade Unions in preventing the development of the Indian working-class in a militant and revolutionary direction. When the "paid agents" of reformism, such as Messrs T. Johnstone and J. F. Sime in 1925, the International Textile Workers' delegation in 1926, and Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth in 1927, [see D 145 (33)] "The Labour Movement and the International Labour Movement" by N. M. Joshi] come to India, they are neither sent

back without being allowed to land as were C. Ashleigh in 1922 and T. Strudwick in 1928, nor are they watched and spied upon, until either they are caught in some technical breach of the law (as was G. Allison in 1927, for which he was given 18 months' R.I.), or they can be entangled in sedition or conspiracy cases. They are allowed to make speeches for which Indian Trade Union organisers would stand a very good chance of getting two years' R.I. under section 124A, because Imperialism knows that without this kind of superficial radicalism they would not be able to carry out their reactionary schemes.

Similarly, when reformist Trade Union organisations send financial assistance either for strikes or for promoting organisation under the control of their allies, no obstacles are put in the way of its receipt and no conspiracy cases are launched on the strength of it.

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The Prosecution have remarked that there is "war to the knife" between the Communists and the reformists of the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. We think that judging merely from its record in connection with the colonial movement, the Second International is such a body that no honest socialist could take up any attitude towards it but one of "war to the knife."

### **The Communist International and the Colonial Revolution**

The difference between the attitude of all shades of reformists and that of the Communists towards the colonial peoples generally is shown, in his curious religious phraseology, but clearly enough in Mr. Andrew's letter to the All-India Trade Union Congress, Jharia Session (See Report). Mr. Andrews speaks as a reformist, but one having sympathy with the oppressed colonial peoples. He is forced to admit "My experience in England has been one of great disappointment with regard to British Labour Policy.....there was literally no serious attempt to understand the real Indian situation....."

In regard to the Communists he proceeds: ".....after very careful enquiry I found that the appeal for a violent revolution which might at any time involve war and bloodshed was never



really absent from their programme.....in other respects however, except this single one of "open violence". I had personally far more sympathy with the Communists than with other Labour Parties in England and Europe. For while the right wing of the Labour Party constantly swerved with regard to the vital questions of "Imperialism" and "racial superiority" and "white Labour" the Communists never wavered for a single second with regard to these essential matters. Already in South Africa I had found the same thing. The only Europeans in South Africa who really and honestly were against what is called the "White Labour Policy", and were ready to admit Indians, Cape Coloured, and Bantus on equal terms were the Communists."

We have already given briefly the attitude of the Communist International towards the colonies. It is one of unhesitating support of the colonial revolutionary movement. The Communist International, as the organisation of the revolutionary working-class of the world, is bound to assist any movement which is directed towards the overthrow of its enemy, Imperialism. The Thesis on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-colonies, passed at the 6th World Congress of the Communist International, states (Section 8):

"They revolutionary emancipatory movement of the colonies and semi-colonies more and more rally round the banner of the Soviet Union, convincing themselves by bitter experience that there is no salvation for them except through alliance with the revolutionary proletariat and through the victory of world proletarian revolution over world Imperialism.

"The proletariat of the U.S.S.R. and the workers' movement in the capitalist countries, headed by the Communist International in their turn are supporting and will more and more effectively support in deeds the emancipatory struggle of all colonial and other dependent peoples; they are the only sure bulwark of the colonial peoples in their struggle for final liberation from the yoke of Imperialism."

This attitude received perhaps its clearest expression in the action of the working-class of France in 1924-25 during the wars waged by French Imperialism against the risings of the colonial populations in Syria and Morocco. Neither of these movements

was a proletarian movement. The population in both cases is backward, hardly any bourgeois class has as yet developed. Nonetheless these movements were genuinely revolutionary, and the French working-class led by the Communist Party and the Confederation General du Travail Unitaire waged a brilliant campaign of demonstrations and strikes in sympathy with them against the French Government.

The Prosecution have asserted that the Communist International is a Russian organisation, and that it is practically an organ of the Soviet Government for promoting its supposed schemes of aggression in other countries. We have exposed the stories and shown that they are false.

But arising from these ideas comes the claim that the Communist International is "interfering" in the affairs of "other countries", made obviously with the object of arousing nationalist prejudice against it as a "foreign" organisation with foreign ideas. We have repeatedly referred to the national narrowness of the mode of thought of the bourgeoisie, and have stated that we do not recognise such national limitations. The Communist International is the organisation and vanguard of the revolutionary working class movement of the world. That movement is a worldwide movement, which the conditions of the present period and the logic of events force to integrate itself more and more closely in disregard of national boundaries.

The greatest indignation is always expressed at any revolutionary organisation receiving help from abroad, especially help in the form of money. We would point out in the first place that in this case the Prosecution are indulging in ridiculous exaggeration in the matter. Apart from sums sent from abroad to the assistance of strikers, which were admittedly spent for the relief etc. we are accused of receiving about Rs. 18,000 in a period of well over two years. This sum would perhaps suffice to maintain two British comrades, one of whom was in India for some 27 months, and the other for 19, at a rate which, we feel certain, the gentlemen who expressed such horror at it would not regard as adequate.

It is interesting to notice that the Imperialist Police found a similar mare's nest in the case of the revolutionary movement in Java. They had conducted a great propaganda against the

workers' and peasants' movement there, that it had been financed from Moscow and so forth, and the Social Democrats of course had joined vigorously in this. But the facts proved to be otherwise:

"The confiscated archives of the Indonesian Communist Party had clearly established the fact that the Indonesian workers and peasants had contributed from their paltry earnings the necessary funds to purchase weapons and to procure all other means to organise the revolt against their oppressors." (P 2365, pages 481-82). (The bourgeoisie themselves can understand the spontaneity of an armed rising. The 'Statesman' during last few days is carrying on the worst campaign against the Congress movement in this country. Just after the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders the editorial article of this paper admits that, apart from non-violence, if the masses wanted to wage a war against the Government, they would procure arms from any source in spite of the Arms Act and rise in open rebellion.)

Similarly there is evidence on the record to prove that the large sums at the disposal of the Red Flag and other unions in Bombay were collected anna by anna from the workers themselves. A genuine mass movement does not need "Moscow Gold".

But even so, though the cry of "Moscow Gold" is ridiculous in view of the facts, we maintain that we have no objection to such help from abroad. We consider that it is the duty of the revolutionary working-class movement to display international solidarity, and if it can express this by financial means it should do so. Finally we should recall the action of the British bourgeoisie themselves in actively supporting with soldiers, warships, and unknown sums of money, the counter revolution in China, which, on their theory, is "no concern" of the British, or in financing heavily over long period of years the Czarist Government and the White Guard Armies in Russia. The British bourgeoisie spent hundreds of millions of pounds on this nefarious object, and yet it expresses the greatest horror when ten or twenty thousand rupees, supposed to come from Moscow, are found with Communists. (They require no proofs to raise scares about 'Bolsheviks' and 'Moscow Gold'. To them Messrs Gandhi, Vallabhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru are all 'Bolsheviks' and even religious

movements, such as the Red Shirts and the Khilafat, are said to have been financed by 'Moscow'.)

The Communist International depends upon the genuine development of the revolutionary movement in each country. But it tries to co-ordinate and advise these movements. The reproach is therefore made that the Communist International supplies a "foreign ideology" to these movements. The Prosecution by their propaganda about our anti-religious and other peculiarities, their emphasis on the "anti-British" theme, and their ridicule of our slightly unorthodox vocabulary, have tried to create this kind of prejudice. And the Government representatives in the Assembly discussion did not hesitate to make the point more directly and vulgarly.

The Communist International certainly tries to supply an ideology to the movement in India. What objection can there be to this on national grounds? In the first place we could remark, as we have done previously, that most of the distinctive ideas of the Communist International which are commonly supposed to be "German" or "Russian" actually originated in England, as we natural in view of the fact that Capitalism and large scale industry first developed there. The Imperialists pride themselves somewhat suprisingly on the introduction into India of the supposedly English ideas of democracy and freedom and the like. Why then should they object if the Communist International tries to introduce the equally "English" idea of class-struggle for example?

The whole conception of the national monopoly of an idea of course is absurd. The ideas of Communism belong to the culture of the world, and cannot be artificially allocated to one country or kept out of another. If the bourgeoisie adhered to their own theory they would have to lay it down that none but Englishmen should study Newtonian mechanics and none but Germans the theory of relativity, that none but Scotchmen should use steam-engines, and none but Americans aeroplanes.

The clear principles of the conflict between the Communist International and the Imperialist States are confused by this nonsense. The conflict is a class conflict. The bourgeoisie in the various countries try to keep their power, and have no scruples

about assisting each other in pursuing that purpose. The working-classes of those countries are striving to take power away from the bourgeoisie, and proclaim the same necessity of international unity for the purpose. One of the means which the bourgeoisie use in the fight is the tradition of nationalism and hatred of foreigners which it has inculcated into the masses. And it supplements this with its State control of the means of transit between the various States and across the boundaries. It institutes searches of people crossing frontiers, and entering ports, and robs them of papers etc., if it suspects that they have any revolutionary connection. It institutes Police control of the issue of passports, so that revolutionaries cannot travel about the world, or are liable to heavy punishment if they venture to do so. Instances of both these methods are on record in this case or in connection with it. It does not confine itself to the control of movements of persons. It controls the movement of literature, and, so far as it can, of ideas.

And in the case of India it must be admitted that it has succeeded to a considerable extent in isolating the country from the rest of the world intellectually. The classics of 19th century Socialism, known to every college student in Europe (except in England of course, which is nearly as backward as India in this respect) are still forbidden as dangerous things, to be seized by the police and exhibited in "conspiracy" cases.

The working-class cannot accept this position. It cannot recognise what the bourgeoisie would have it recognise, that its first loyalty should be to the bourgeois State. It looks upon the bourgeois State as a weapon used by the bourgeoisie for crushing the working-class. It has no loyalty to that State and takes it as its duty to overthrow it. Its loyalty is only to the working-class and its international revolutionary movement

Hence the Communist International has no prejudice at all in this matter. It will carry on its work as an international revolutionary organisation, striving to unite and lead on an international scale the revolutionary working-class and colonial nationalist movement of the world, in spite of any steps the bourgeois States may take against it.

## V THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM

As we have shown in our treatment of the national revolution, the part played by the peasantry in that revolution is one of very great importance. The policy which we put forward for the solution of the agrarian problem is given there, and in the statements of policy of the WPP etc., which are on record, in brief outline. Similarly our actual activities in connection with the peasant movement had relatively little chance to expand and develop. The Magistrate remarks in his Committal Order that "Beyond theoretical theses the Party has done little work among them (peasants)" (Page 159). This, however, has not prevented the Prosecution from indulging its bent for propaganda at the expense of our peasant programme and proposals. It has represented us, in accordance with its usual line, as indulging in ridiculous theorising about the class structure of the rural population, and as planning to raise a class war in the peaceful Indian countryside.

It is therefore necessary to place the principles underlying our peasant policy in correct perspective, justifying these principles and to show that the trend of development which we advocate is historically inevitable. The methods by which we propose to bring about this development are neither conspiratorial nor disastrous. They are based on economic factors and the alignment of class forces as they exist today in Indian society.

### **The poverty of the Indian peasantry**

The agrarian question is no doubt the central question of Indian life. Nearly 90 per cent of the annual production of India consists of agricultural produce and 71 per cent of the total population is engaged in agriculture. The agrarian question is the question of the proverbial poverty of the Indian peasants—and of their backward methods of production. The different classes differ in their formulations of the problem, and so do the solutions offered by these classes to this problem. The one point on which official as well as non-official authorities agree is the unspeakable poverty of the peasant masses.

In 1901, Digby worked out a figure for the average annual income per head for the whole of India, and gave "£ 1-2s-4d per

head as a tolerably sure quantity " He adds "that does not come to one penny per day There is not a decent living in it, even if it were equally divided There is not the living of the cattle on a respectable farmstead in a western country " (Digby "Prosperous British India" page 617)

Coming to a more recent investigation, that of Professor K T Shah, who worked out a similar figure for the year 1921, we find a more doleful picture Professor K T Shah says "The average Indian income is so small that is quite insufficient to meet even all the primary wants of man, of food, clothing, and shelter The average Indian income is just enough to feed two men in every three of the population (or give all of them two in place of the three meals they need) on condition that they all consent to go naked, live out of doors all the year round, have no amusement or recreation and want nothing else but food, and that the lowest, the coarsest and least nutritious " (K T Shah and Khambatta "The Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India" page 253)

Even the reactionary Simon Report, while comparing the average income of India per head with that of Great Britain, remarks that "the contrast remains startling, even after allowing for the difference between the range of needs to be satisfied " (Report, Volume I page 334)

### **Imperialist and nationalist approach to the question**

The apologists of Imperialism who admit that India is poor, maintain that she was poorer still before the British came The British rule brought peace and order and modern means of communication and with them "increasing rural prosperity " It is pointed out that irrigation, agricultural departments, research stations, etc , are doing their very best for the "economic uplift" of the rural population Many Indian civilians have written books on the agrarian question Many of them have brought together valuable material about fractionisation of holdings, the growing indebtedness of the peasants, the primitive and backward nature of agricultural economy in India The measures they have proposed are unable even to scratch the surface of the agrarian problem The Imperialist approach to the agrarian problem is

based on the desire to preserve and perpetuate the strangle-hold of Imperialism on India and its sources of raw materials.

Recently many nationalist writers on economics have devoted themselves to this problem. They correctly point out that the present plight of the Indian peasantry is due to the political domination of the British in India, to the Imperialist policy of hindering the growth of indigenous industries, and of controlling finance in the interests of British capital. But in practice, however, the agrarian programme of the nationalists is essentially of a reformist nature. Even this reformist programme is urged with a half-heartedness characteristic of the whole nationalist movement, which does not offer a consistent and determined opposition to Imperialism, as it aims at a joint partnership in the Imperialist exploitation of the workers and peasants of India.

### **Class-Struggle the fulcrum of the whole Issue**

The apologists of Imperialism as well as of nationalism persist in denying the class nature of the agrarian problem. Technical improvements, liberalisation of the bureaucratic machinery and the partial transfer of the financial control into the hands of the indigenous bourgeoisie is all that they think is necessary for the solution of this problem. The Imperialists are never tired of talking of the "civilising and cultural mission", of the era of technical improvements they have opened. They were eloquent over their duty "to educate the backward races for prosperity, progress and culture". The same hypocritical lies have been repeated parrot-like by the Labour lackeys of Imperialism from their Cabinet seats.

The nationalists of the genuine Gandhian brand totally repudiate the element of class-struggle in their agrarian programme. Their programme restricts itself to singing praises of the "golden age" of ancient India, of the self-sufficient village Panchayats and of the whole chain of other impracticable Utopias from the charkha to the various schemes of "village reconstruction." They are never tired of calling for a united front of the landlords and peasants, of workers and capitalists, for the "substance of Independence" which ultimately means an abject and ignoble compromise with Imperialism.



The denial of class conflict in agrarian conditions is based on a wilful misunderstanding of the economics of agrarian production and appropriation. The Imperialists, however, deny class-struggle in words only. The agrarian policy of Imperialism is based on its own class interests, which are directed towards the monopolisation of the raw material resources of its colonies and towards preserving its monopolist hold of the colonial markets. Similarly the agrarian demands of the nationalist movement can never go beyond the circle of the class interests of its friends and financiers, the capitalists and the zamindars.

When we say that the agrarian problem is not merely one of improving agricultural technique, we do not in any way deny the importance of these improvements, on the other hand, we maintain that if the improvements of agricultural technique are to be universal—and they cannot be of any use to the broad masses of the peasantry without being universal—they will immediately come up against the barriers set up by the given distribution of private property in land. This would immediately bring up the question of vested interests, of landlordism and of class-struggle. Class-struggle therefore, is the fulcrum of the whole issue.

### **Formulation of the Problem**

A correct formulation of the agrarian problem must necessarily be preceded by an investigation into the relations between the producer, the expropriator and the middle man, as well as the relations of private property in land. But these relations cannot be considered detached from the social order in which they exist and with which they are correlated. This correlation will enable us to understand not merely the past history of agrarian conditions but also to anticipate the trend of development in the future. Thus we will not be able to understand the agrarian problem in India in the last and in this century, without taking into consideration the extent and the nature of the capitalist development which corresponds with these periods. This correlation will enable us to obtain a real insight into the causes of the growing pauperisation of the Indian peasantry under Imperialist rule. It will enable us to formulate the programme and policy and the perspective of the future agrarian development in India. Further it will enable us to

see that the path towards this development necessarily leads through an agrarian revolution towards a socialist organisation of agriculture, which alone will guarantee an equitable distribution of the products of labour.

### **Early Phases of Capitalist Development Destructive and Progressive**

The accession of the British to power brought India, as if at a stroke, under the political and economic domination of a more developed social order, namely Capitalism. The 150 years of capitalist rule in India did not play the civilising role which its apologists claim. The story of the early development of Capitalism is everywhere "written in the annals of human history with blood and fire". Marx has most vividly described the birth pangs of Capitalism in Europe in the closing chapters of "Capital." "Capital" he said "comes into the world soiled with mire from top to toe, and oozing blood from every pore." (pages 842-843). In Europe, however, Capitalism in its early days played a revolutionary role. It ushered in a society based on a higher and more developed form of production. It broke old feudal ties and relations and substituted others in their place. To speak in the language of the "Communist Manifesto": "Wherever the bour-geoisie has risen to power it has destroyed all feudal, patriarchal and idyllic relationships. It has ruthlessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bond men to their "natural superiors" It has left no other bond between man and man but crude self interest and unfeeling cash payment."

### **In India merely destructive**

The early period of capitalist penetration in India had none of the redeeming features, which have accompanied and followed the dawn of Capitalism in Western Europe. According to the Colonial Thesis of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International: "The devastating consequences everywhere brought about by capitalist development, in particular in the first stages of its existence, are reproduced in the colonies to a monstrous degree and at an accelerated rate, owing to the penetration of foreign capital. The progressive results of Capitalism, on the other hand, are, for the most part, completely lacking in the colonies." (P 1228, page 10).

### **Marx on the British Conquest**

We shall briefly review the devastating consequences, which accompanied the early stages of capitalist penetration in India, and indicate its effect on agrarian conditions. In his well-known "Letters on India", written in 1853, Karl Marx pointed out that "The misery brought by the British to India was fundamentally different and infinitely more far reaching than anything that India had ever suffered." Similarly we find "The whole series of civil wars, invasions, conquests and famines which India seems to have undergone in rapid succession may appear complicated and destructive, but were in reality confined to its surface. England on the other hand has pulled down the entire structure of the Indian social order, without any sign of rebirth being visible. This loss of an old world without the gain of a new one lends a tragic touch to the present misery of the Indians. Herein differs India of today, under the British rule, from all its old traditions—from the history of its past."

### **The destruction of the village community**

The political stage in India had seen many a drastic change of scene but the social order had remained intact—from ancient times right up to the first decade of the 19th century. The productive basis of this old social order was agriculture, coupled with hand industry. The unit of social organisation was the village community based on communal ownership of land, on direct coupling of agriculture and hand-industries, and on a fixed form of division of labour. Marx has described this Indian village community as follows: "They constitute self-sufficient productive entities, the area of land upon which production is carried on ranging from a hundred to several thousand acres. The greater part of the product is produced for the satisfaction of the immediate needs of the community, not as commodities. Only a superfluity of produce undergoes transformation into commodities, this being in part a primary result of the activities of the State, to which since immemorial days a definite proportion of the produce has gone in the form of rent in kind" (P 455, "Capital", page 377).

Every family in the village tilled the soil, spun and wove and pursued other sundry trades. Every village had its carpenter, blacksmith, weaver, priest, school master etc. These artisans were other servants of the village as a whole, receiving a fixed annual payment in kind, or holding the plot of land at a reduced rental. The village headman was the highest official of the village and the tax-gatherer as well.

The village community thus formed a self-contained unit and was the backbone of the entire social order which prevailed in India up to the beginning of the 19th century. The surplus which went from the villages in form of tribute to the feudal chiefs and princes made the luxury and glory of the capital cities of old. The industries of the towns were mainly for the production of articles of luxury for the king and his courtiers. The exporting industries which grew up in certain commercial towns near the great trade routes also produced in the main articles of luxury namely muslin, silks, shawls, etc., which never found their way into the village. The industry which supplied the daily wants of the masses of peasantry was rooted in the villages and petrified in the caste guilds of the village. Within these limits it could only remain in the same primitive stage, without any development for centuries together.

Dynasties came and dynasties went but the village community remained. Many a time a tyrannical chief extorted too much tribute from the peasants, invasions desolated whole villages, internecine warfare razed whole villages to the ground, but when peace was restored the village community reproduced itself in its original form. On this basic groundwork of the village communities rose from time to time, centralised States which discharged the following functions: public works, administration and finance. Public works consisted of irrigation and drainage which were so essential for the upkeep of the fertility and productivity of the soil.

Unlike their predecessors, the British came to India as agents of commercial capital, urged more by the greed of profit-hunting than by the desire for political conquest. Their objective was the monopoly of the Eastern trade as well as of shipping transport to

Europe We are not concerned here with that early history of plunder, robbery and murder perpetrated by the East India Company, to satisfy its greed for gold It must be remembered however that it was this very plunder which accelerated the pace of the industrial revolution in Great Britain, made the industrial utilisation of the steam-engine and the spinning jenny a reality, and thus created the basis for the extended capitalist exploitation of India We have to enquire into the economic effects of the early British rule (the 19th century) on Indian society and particularly on the peasantry

### **Penetration of Capitalism in Agriculture**

One of the most decisive indications of the penetration of Capitalism in agriculture under the British rule was the dissolution of the village community This, as Marx points out, was due not too much to the interference of the British tax-gatherer or the British soldier as to the influence of the British steam engine and free trade The soldier who devastated villages and the tyrannical chief who extorted exorbitant tribute from the community have ever been the enemies of the village community in India The British no doubt played both these roles, perhaps in a far more brutal manner than their predecessors 'The British Government had demanded 83 per cent of the gross rental as revenue in 1822, and 75 per cent in 1833 This was a crushing demand which left the landlords and the cultivators resourceless ' (R C Dutt, *India in the Victorian Age* page 47) This excessive demand made by the traditional tax gatherer made him into a virtual landlord-oppressor who wrung from the peasants the utmost he could In the Deccan the British Government 'made direct arrangements with every separate cultivator and imposed upon him a tax to be revised at each recurring settlement ' This, adds R C Dutt, (*ibid*, page 51) "necessarily weakened the village communities " The assessments of 1824-28 which demanded 56 per cent of the produce were based on faulty measurements and ended in oppression "Every effort lawful and unlawful was made to get the utmost out of the wretched peasantry, who were subjected to torture in some instances, cruel and revolting beyond

all description" (ibid, page 52) The introduction of the ryotwari system in the Deccan swept aside the village communities, which were universal there

But what knocked the very basis out of these institutions were not these administrative changes introduced by the British. It was their influence as commercial capitalists and traders, which undermined the basis of the village communities, i.e. their self-sufficiency. The systematic destruction of India's manufacturing industry opening up of trade, flooding of Indian markets with machine made goods, it is these things which led to the ultimate break up of the village community. Between 1814 and 32 Indian exports of certain piece goods fell from 1,266,608 to 306,086 pieces and imports rose from 818,208 to 51,777,277 yards during the same time (ibid, page 108). In 1833 it was stated (ibid page 105) that "the English manufactures were generally consumed by all above the very poorest throughout India". The destruction of the village industry destroyed the self-sufficiency of the villages. The villager became dependent on the traders in the town. The village was linked up with the market which was now rapidly growing up.

### **Tax and Rents in Money**

Another element which the British introduced into the village was the payment of assessment in money. The peasant had now not only to find money for the payment of assessment but also for the purchase of other necessities of life such as cloth, salt, oil etc. He thus became the plaything of all the fluctuations in prices which are characteristic of capitalist economy. Gadgil points out ("Industrial Evolution of India" page 23) "The prices of food grains and other products in India fluctuated enormously in all parts of the country during the first 50 years of the 19th century but through all these fluctuations there was a common tendency and that was of the prices to fall. The common and the generally accepted explanation of this phenomenon was the introduction of money economy in the country, especially the introduction of cash payment of Government assessments. The fall of prices of agricultural produce in the early days of the introduction of

money was inevitable. The money in circulation was not enough to meet the increased demand especially just after the harvest time. "The duty" thrown on the amount of currency in the country largely increased and thus the price of commodities began to fall.

### **Land a Commodity**

The logical consequence of the introduction of money and commodity economy is that land itself became a commodity. Those cultivators and zamindars who were unable to pay assessment in cash were evicted and their land sold. The sale of land increased and a process of redistribution of ownership in land set in.

### **Expropriation of the Common Lands**

Before we consider the general results of the capitalist elements introduced into Indian agrarian economy we must mention one more fact. The forceful expropriation of common lands, especially grazing lands, belonging to the village community has been a phenomenon accompanying capitalist development in all countries. Marx pointed out that this process was going on for almost three hundred years in England. This process of expropriation was accompanied by a ruthless terrorism, mass eviction of peasants, and the lowering of the wages of the agricultural labourer in England. This process "acquired the ground for capitalist agriculture, made the land part and parcel of capital, while providing for the needs of masterless proletarians" (*Capital*, page 813, P. 455). The capitalist state in India deprived the village communities of their free grazing lands by closing the forests and conserving them for general revenue purposes. Digby says in reference to this: "What the people lost by the deprivation of the grazing grounds, dead wood for fuel etc. is unknown. A large sum would be needed to recompense the cultivators, deprived of their ancient rights of grazing, fuel collection, gathering of roots and other privileges."

### **General Effects of Capitalist Economy in Agriculture**

Thus the destruction of the self-sufficient village community, the ruin of village as well as urban hand-industries, the

introduction and expansion of money economy and trade, and the confiscation of common lands and pastures have all been the chief elements characterising the penetration of capitalism in agriculture everywhere. The general effects of this have been "the subjection of the country-side to the rule of the town," mass eviction of peasantry, the increase in the army of landless labourers and the consequent lowering of wages. The peasant was in the past exploited by the tax-gatherer and had to render occasional feudal services to his feudal overlord. But apart from unforeseen invasions and wars, he enjoyed some sort of security of tenure etc., attached to the village community. Under Capitalism and especially in its early stages he became a helpless prey to a whole gang of vultures, the trader, the money-lender and the capitalist Government. He became a plaything of all the freaks and fancies of the anarchy of capitalist economy, fluctuations of prices, slumps and famines. Thus under capitalism the peasant has no security, he is always in danger of being swept into the ever increasing flood of landless labourers and pauperised proletarians.

### **Growth of Capitalist Agriculture in Europe and America**

These general effects are observed everywhere. In Europe however where an indigenous growth of Capitalism took place they were followed by a rapid development of machine industry. This led to the absorption of the landless labourers (at least in the early stages) into the newly developing industries. On the other hand the development of machine industry created a stable basis for capitalist agriculture. Land had become a commodity and the ruin of the small peasantry led to the transfer of land into the hands of capitalist landlords who began the cultivation of large estates with the help of modern machines. This involved a definite improvement. The primitive methods characteristic of small scale agriculture became less profitable. Large scale agriculture which with its modern methods and machines is more productive came into existence. Technically this is a progress, but it necessarily brings with itself other conflicts, between the farm hand and the capitalist farmer, between the small peasantry and the rich



farmers, who control the co-operatives, and lastly between the peasantry as a whole and the bank magnates who control the wheat pools and the cotton markets.

### **The Penetration of Capitalism into India led to Decline and Stagnation of Agriculture**

In India the capitalist element was introduced under the auspices of a commercial capital which is interested in (1) plundering the country by open and shameless methods, (2) in ruining Indian industries, (checking the growth of modern industries and in pushing forward British goods in India), and keeping the monopoly of the raw material resources of India in its own hands. The operation of British commercial capital in the 19th century was accompanied by unprecedented and unmitigated disaster for Indian agriculture. The first 75 years of this century may be characterised as a period of acute agrarian crisis. Owing to the ruthless plunder carried out by the Company officials and their agents in the name of collecting revenue, the neglect of administration and irrigation, and lastly the systematic destruction of indigenous industries, the rate of accumulation of agricultural wealth fell so low that even simple reproduction became an impossibility. A series of famines ravaged and depopulated the country. Goaded into desperation by the inhuman oppression, the peasantry rose in various places against landlords, planters, money-lenders and the British Government.

### **The 19th Century a Period of Acute Agrarian Crisis and Decline**

We shall give a few characteristics of this period. In the early days the East India Company was merely concerned with extorting the maximum amount of revenue with the minimum of expenditure. The Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis was devised with this express object. It vested in the zamindars proprietary rights over the districts, the revenues of which they collected for the State. This measure "reduced the vast masses of the peasantry of Bihar, Orissa and Bengal from their position of allodial proprietors to that of mere tenants at will; thus they were

handed over to the tender mercy of a few cruel and rapacious zamindars." According to the Regulation the zamindar could sell his property or a part of it. After such a sale or transfer all the previous engagements with previous tenants were automatically cancelled. Thus the zamindar could sell his property, buy it again under a false name and then increase the rent as much as he pleased. In order to get punctual payments from the zamindar the Government passed the Distraint Act against the tenant by which the ryots "were rendered liable to personal arrest and imprisonment, their doors forced open by the Police and their houses entered by the Police in search of distrainable property." (Reference, Abhaycharan Das "The Indian Ryot etc." 1885, page 33).

### **The Neglect of Irrigation and Drainage**

Another effect of the Regulation of 1793 was that the Company's Government totally neglected public works. This led to the neglect of the old system of irrigation and drainage and the consequent destruction of agriculture. Das points out in his work that the Regulation "not only declared the zamindars permanent proprietors of the soil but also entrusted them with the construction of roads, khals, embankments and other works of public utility". (ibid, page 349). But the zamindar was nothing but a parasitical blood sucker. The same author quotes further a newspaper extract of the year 1840, which describes how "whole plains, which were once paddy fields, had become desolate, while the zamindar continued to extract the rent by attaching the bullocks of his ryots" (ibid, page 352).

### **The Sub-Infeudation**

The zamindar was not the only parasite feeding on the ryot. The zamindar himself being an absentee landlord was ever willing to sell a part of his right to squeeze the peasantry. Thus arose that system of subletting and sub-infeudation with its hierarchy of Putneedars, Dur-putneedars etc. . . . "whole sole object is nothing but to squeeze the life blood out of the ryots". (ibid, page 210).

### **Parasitic Middlemen**

The increase of trade in the first half of the 19th century no doubt led to the accumulation of capital in the hands of the indigenous merchant class. This capital could not go to the building up of industry as in other capitalist countries. The supremacy of the British commercial capital prevented any such development. This capital was diverted to land, and here too it did not reach the soil in the shape of improvements or agricultural machines etc. It was used for the purchase of subletting rights from the zamindars, who were always in want of money for their wasteful luxuries and for the payment of Government revenue.

### **The Money-lender**

Apart from these parasitic leeches who appropriated more than two-thirds of the produce of the peasants in the form of rental, and squeezed out the rest in the form of illegal cesses there arose another evil which is common to all provinces and periods, since the advent of the British. No doubt the money-lender was not unknown before the British came, but it is only after the penetration of Capitalism and the universal spread of money economy that he became an all-powerful and an all-pervading evil. According to Digby: "Before our time the village lender was, and in the countries named he is still (the countries named are Kurram Valley, Swat, Afghanistan) a dependent, a servant of the rural community, and never what our system is making him in the Punjab villages—that community's master. (Digby, *ibid.*, pages 298-99). The exorbitant demand of rent by the zamindar and the introduction of money economy forced the cultivator to go to the money-lender. Not only did the money-lender extort enormous interest but under the existing judicial system he wielded "a great power over his debtor". The Mahajan and the Marwari is at the same time a trader and can exploit the peasant in his double capacity. "When the Government taxes are demanded, the ryots hire money from the Marwaris to pay them in. Should the debtor sell his grain to pay the taxes the Marwari alone is the purchaser" (Das, *ibid.*, page 320). Naturally the cultivator has to sell his grain far below the market price.

**The Growth of Parasitic Landlords in the Ryotwari Provinces**

Although the systems of land tenure introduced by the British differ in different provinces, the same parasitic elements reproduce themselves everywhere, and thus the same spectacle of agrarian stagnation and decline throughout the country during the nineteenth century. The same capitalist elements i.e. (1) introduction of money economy, and (2) saleability of land, operated everywhere. These in conjunction with the state policy of the British Government to destroy indigenous industries and prevent the growth of new ones, naturally produced the same effects everywhere. In ryotwari provinces the cultivator was given absolute ownership, and had to pay the tax directly to the Government. In these provinces as well as in the Punjab, a movement of gradual transference of land from the hands of the original cultivators to those of landlords and money-lenders set in. This process did not lead to a consolidation of holdings, or to the development of capitalist agriculture, but merely to the growth of parasitic proprietors, who pocketed almost the entire produce of the cultivators. In many cases as in the Deccan for example, the Marwari money-lender did not even take possession of the land. "The Marwari merely-appropriated to himself the entire profits of cultivation in virtue of the large number of debt bonds that he held . . . thus was the great portion of the peasant class reduced to virtual serfdom". (Gadgil, *ibid* 33).

**Fractionation of Holdings**

The destruction of village handicrafts in the urban hand industry set free enormous sections of population which had now to find their livelihood in agriculture. This led to an over-pressure on agriculture and created a large class of landless agricultural labourers. The absence of any other employment for the members of a peasant family resulted in the subdivision of the parental holding. The average size of holding in India declined in the nineteenth century. The unit of agriculture became more and more uneconomic, leading to the decline of agriculture. This tendency is clearly shown in the figures of the average holding of a typical village in Poona given by Dr. H. Mann:

Year	Size of average holding
1771	40 acres
1818	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
1820-40	14 „
1915	7 „

Dr Mann points out that "the excessive subdivision which has progressively increased during the British rule is a very real evil" Digby quotes from the Government Report of 1887-88 facts about the various districts in the Bombay Presidency, which go to show that 30 to 40 per cent of the holdings were unable to support their owners for more than six months. Similar details are quoted by him in the lower provinces of Bengal. Speaking of ryots holding less than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres in Patna, he says that "they can only take one full meal a day instead of two, they are badly housed, and in cold weather insufficiently clothed. As to labourers, their condition is still worse."

## Famines

The main concrete results of this period of decline of agriculture was (1) famines, (2) agrarian risings, and (3) fall in the average income per head.

According to Digby, the nineteenth century is characterised by the steady sinking of India and its population into a State of chronic famine-strickenness. There were no doubt famines before the British rule, but "not one approached in extent or intensity the three great distresses of the last quarter of the nineteenth century." He gave the following instructive summary of the famines of the nineteenth century.

1st period of 25 years	5 famines	deaths	1,000,000
2nd period of 25 years	2 famines	„	500,000
3rd period of 25 years	6 famines	„	5,000,000 (recorded)
4th period of 25 years	18 famines	„	26,000,000 (estimated)

These figures speak for themselves. The famines of the last quarter were far more numerous, far more extensive and far more destructive. Apart from these famine deaths proper, there are fever epidemics, which invariably follow the increased malnutrition consequent on famines. In 1897 the total number of "fever deaths" was 5,015,842. "An appreciable portion of these 5 millions of deaths are practically famine deaths in so-called non-famine years." (Digby, *ibid*, page 157). The impoverishment of the soil due to the acute famine crisis of the last quarter of the nineteenth century led to an enormous fall in the agricultural income of India. In spite of 16 million additional acres being brought under cultivation since 1882, "the agricultural income of India in 1898-99 was only Rs. 285,86,34,562 as against Rs. 350 crores in 1882, a decrease of about 18 per cent on the figure of 1882." (Digby, *ibid*, page 156). These figures illustrate with sufficient force the results of the predatory economy of Imperialism on Indian agriculture.

### **The Agrarian Risings of the Nineteenth Century**

The first three decades of the nineteenth century were characterised by a series of agrarian risings. The violent and rapid introduction of capitalist elements into the agrarian economy of India were the chief causes of these revolts. All palliatives provided for by the pre-British economy had been destroyed. A new layer of exploiters was superimposed on the top of the old. The zamindars and the money-lenders assumed more disgusting forms. The European planter had appeared on the scene and operated with all the aggravated forms of Asiatic oppression. Immense masses of peasantry and artisans were turned out of their lands and professions, a prey to poverty and death.

The great rebellion of 1857 was no doubt the last desperate effort of the feudal princes to regain their lost splendour and power. Nevertheless it was the background of intense agrarian unrest of the huge masses of the landless peasantry and the workless artisans which made it a mass revolt. The peasantry was not consciously fighting for its rights. It was an elementary revolt on the part of the peasants against the new conditions of oppression.

Sir William Muir recognised this factor in the events of 1857-58 "Sale had everywhere ruined numerous hereditary proprietors in the village communities, and had everywhere changed them from a contented and faithful yeomanry into a repining and disloyal body of cultivators ever brooding over their grievances and predisposed on the first opportunity to break out into lawless acts When deprived of their proprietary title they were still, as a rule, left in the cultivating occupancy of the soil, powerless for good but most active and vigorous for evil—a rankling sore in the side of the Government " (Quoted from Das, *ibid*, page 577) The leaders of the rebellion did not and could not put forward the class demands of the peasantry On the other hand, many of the landless peasants, "Kols" for instance, joined the Englishmen and were rewarded later on "by being allowed to loot some of the rebellious zamindars " (Das, *ibid*, page 552 )

Indigo riots were the logical outcome of the policy of forced cultivation of commercial crops by the European planters The ryot was compelled to plough, to weed his land and to cut and cart the plant at times when he would prefer being engaged in the cultivation of other crops of superior profit, the land actually ready for other crops or even sown with such crops was forcibly ploughed up and resown with indigo " (Das, *ibid*, p 306) The Indigo Commission of 1860, which was appointed after 25 years of Indigo terrorism in Bengal, admits, "the serious charges of kidnapping men, carrying cattle and rooting up gardens and other offences" brought by the ryots against the planters It further says that "the practice of imprisoning individuals in the factory or its outhouses was of common occurrence" These harrowing conditions of oppression led to a series of risings in which many indigo factories were razed to the ground The inquiry of the Indigo Commission did not stop these atrocities They continued in Bengal and Bihar and led to the mass emigration of the peasants to the Nepal territories. Das quotes from a newspaper of 1887 "Every now and then for the last ten years, there are revolts against the system of indigo cultivation that obtains, and more or less widespread demonstration of an agrarian rising They have been promptly suppressed after the manner in which all popular

disturbances are suppressed under the Indian Government's 'peace at any price' administration of law; but none the less do they show that there must be something radically wrong about the system of indigo cultivation which gives rise to them." (Das, *ibid*, page 314). Indigo tyranny and oppression was the first brutal form of exploitation connected with the growing of commercial crops. Later on the same exploitation made its appearance in the legalised oppression of plantation labour.

### **Risings against the Zamindars**

The zamindars of Bengal and Bihar were the parasitic creatures of the British Government with unlimited powers for evil and mischief and none whatsoever for good. They could rick-rent, ruin and ravage the peasant, oppress and torture him to extort innumerable illegal cesses. When his own powers failed, he could issue a distraint warrant and call the assistance of the police and the civil court to fleece his tenant. The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859, the so-called "charter of the Bengal cultivators," did not solve the problem. The strangle-hold of the zamindar over the tenant was not shaken in the least. A.C. Das from whose book we have quoted above says that for the wealthy zamindars the courts of justice turned into instruments of oppression and into means of filling their own coffers. In Pabna in 1873, the attempt of the zamindars to force enhanced rents on the peasants by fraudulent means resulted in "a violent and threatening outbreak." Many such outbreaks took place during these days in Bengal and Bihar. Das describes the conditions obtaining in Bengal in that period in the following words: "The disputes between the zamindars and ryots have divided Bengal into two great camps, which have terrible reprisals to make against each other. Serious riots, breaches of peace, bloodshed, murder, plundering and burning of villages and atrocities of a like nature are a daily occurrence." (Das, *ibid*, page 562). The risings against zamindars in Bengal in this period seem to have been more or less organised. The General Administration Report for Dacca Division of the year 1872 quoted by Das speaks of "combinations of ryots" and of "strikes".



Of course these "strikes" were broken by the zamindars with the help of the police, and bribed hirelings.

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### **The Deccan Rising against Money-lenders**

In the Ryotwari provinces the place of the zamindars is taken by the landlord Government. "The land revenue is generally collected from the cultivators direct. The whole of the economic rental is taken, leaving to the cultivators little more than the wages of their labour". (R.C. Dutt, *ibid*, page 98). Thus the peasant cultivator under Ryotwari is kept on the brink of starvation. He is invariably dependent on the money-lender for the payment of his annual land revenue. In abnormal times, i.e. in cases of failure of crops, fall of prices etc., he goes wholesale into the hands of the money-lender.

During the days of the Civil War in America, and the consequent break in the export of American cotton to England, cotton cultivation grew very rapidly in Bombay. The peasants borrowed freely, but were always able to pay, as the cotton was fetching good prices. In the meanwhile the Government increased the assessment. After the conclusion of the Civil War, prices as well as wages fell. The cotton cultivation declined. Failure to pay the interest brought debtors to Court. The cultivators were unable to pay the new enhanced assessment demanded by the Government. Money-lenders refused to lend. "The result was that hatred of the money-lenders which had been smouldering for some time became more bitter, and in 1875 expressed itself in the Deccan Riots, which consisted of a series of preconcerted attacks and outrages on village sahkars in the districts of Poona, Satara, Ahmednagar and Sholapur. One feature of these outrages was that all account-books and bonds which could be found were destroyed by the rioters." (G. Keatinge "Rural Economy in the Bombay Deccan" pages 85-86).

The four different risings described above were directed against the four different factors introduced by capitalist economy in India, namely (1) the mass eviction and displacement of peasants and artisans, (2) the planter, (3) the zamindar, and (4) the money-lender. These risings are clear indications of the crisis brought

about by the superimposition of capitalist economy on the top of the feudal one.

The fall of average annual income per head is another sure index of the decline of agriculture, in as much as the total agricultural income of India forms 90 per cent of her gross income. The earliest figure available for India's annual income per head was that given by Dadabhai Naoroji for 1870 which was Rs. 20 per head. Then we have the figure calculated by Baring and Barbour for 1882 which was Rs. 27/-. For the year 1900, Lord Curzon gives the figure of Rs. 30/- per head which is disputed by Digby. Digby's estimate is more reliable as he gives the details of his calculations, while Lord Curzon has nowhere said how he calculated his figure. Digby's figure which is Rs. 17.4 may be a little too low, but is certainly nearer the truth. The last quarter of the 19th Century, as we have already seen was a period of acute famine crisis and was accompanied by a tremendous fall of agricultural income. Further if we take into consideration the rising price level during these years we arrive at the following table, which is fairly indicative of the general fall of the annual income per head towards the close of the 19th Century.

Name	Year	Rupees	Price Index	Rupees
D Naoroji	1870	20	100	20
Baring Barbour	1882	27	120	22.5
Digby	1900	17.4	140	12

(N.B. Price index in column 4 is weighed for 100 articles (See K T Shah and Khambata, *ibid*, page 111)

The reduced figures for income given in column 5 clearly show that there is tendency for the average annual income per head to fall.

### **The Factors which Contributed to the Decline of Agriculture in the 19th Century**

The decline of Agriculture in India in the 19th Century was direct outcome of the exploitation of India by the commercial and loan capital of Britain. This exploitation took the form of an open

and undisguised plunder in the early days of the Company's rule. "The rulers of India might be governing men but first and foremost they were merchants." Almost the entire land revenue collected by the British was exported out of the country without any return whatsoever. This drain rendered all accumulation impossible leading to the impoverishment of the soil and the pauperisation of the masses. After the abolition of the Company's rule, the commercial and the finance capital ceased to be identified with the rulers; but the exploitation and drain continued more extensively, though through more or less legalised channels. The entire load of the tribute extracted by British merchants and finance-capital fell on the shoulders of the Indian peasants. After the destruction of indigenous hand-industries the main source of wealth in India was agriculture. It has always been the policy of British Imperialism to discourage the growth of modern industries in India, and convert her into a country of raw produce subservient to the manufacturing needs of Great Britain. In fact this is the essence of the domination of British finance-capital over India. The predatory economy of British Imperialism in India in the 19th Century almost defeated its own ends. It almost killed the goose that laid the golden egg.

Firstly as already seen British Imperialism not only retained all the feudal and parasitic elements in the agrarian economy of the country, but even strengthened some of them. British Imperialism does not extract all its tribute directly from the peasants, but through its feudal intermediaries like zamindars, talukdars etc. who continued to exercise their feudal rights of property with its sanction and support. Further, capitalist economy has strengthened the class of money-lenders which preys upon the peasantry. This retention of feudalist exploitation, in conjunction with the Imperialist tribute, proved a great obstacle to the development of capitalist agriculture.

Secondly the efforts of the Imperialist Government to replenish the impoverished agriculture by irrigation and public works were negligible in proportion to their increasing demand of land

revenue. R.C. Dutt in the preface to his book "India in the Victorian Age" says: "Except where the land revenue is permanently settled, it is revised and enhanced at each new settlement once in 30 or 20 years. It proposes to take 50 per cent of the rental or of the economic rent, but virtually takes a much larger share in Bombay and Madras. And to it are added other special taxes on land which can be enhanced indefinitely at the will of the State. The land assessment is thus excessive and it is also uncertain. Place any country in the world under the operation of these rules and agriculture will languish." (page XIII).

This decline of agriculture meant "permanent poverty and recurring famines", and the consequent decrease in the purchasing power of India. This opened up a gloomy prospect of the narrowing of India's capacity for the absorption of British manufactured goods.

Lastly, another factor which largely contributed to this decline was the disproportionate development of railways and irrigation. The total expenditure on the railways up to 1880 was £ 24,644,702 while the total expenditure on irrigation during the same time was £ 11,851,193 (R.C. Dutt, *ibid*, page 362). Towards the end of the last century the same disproportion prevailed. During the last 20 years the expenditure of the respective heads was as follows:—

Railways £ 4,827,522.

Irrigation £ 139,895 (R.C. Dutt, *ibid*, page 594).

The British Government was at first more interested in the construction of railways for the expansion of its trade and for the military domination of the country than in irrigation and in the improvement of agriculture. The lop-sided development was one of the causes which contributed to the decline of agriculture, as has been recognised by the Imperialists themselves in their Famine Commission Reports of the closing years of the last century.

### **The Imperialist Effort to check this Decline**

During the first two decades of this century British Imperialism attempted to check this tendency towards an agrarian decline. These attempts were made in the interest of Imperialism itself. They did not in any way lighten the load of exploitation weighing on the shoulders of the peasantry. These attempts were in the main directed towards the normalisation of agrarian conditions within the framework of the existing feudal-Imperialist State. This normalisation was directed in the main towards (1) removal of the most flagrant abuses practised by the zamindars and the money-lenders, and (2) the improvement of agricultural technique.

### **Tenancy Acts**

The absolute powers vested in the zamindars of Bengal and U.P. who had no interest in agriculture beyond the rent they got from the cultivators, had proved disastrous. The various Tenancy and Rent Acts passed in the last and this century gave protection to a section of tenants by granting them fixity of tenure. They were thus enabled to live a fairly stable life on the land they cultivated, which was quite essential for the progress of agriculture and for the steady supply of raw material. These reforms, however, in no way touched the question of proprietary rights of the zamindars. The tenant was given merely the use of the holding whether temporary or permanent. These reforms were accomplished under feudalism and not against it.

### **Legislation against the Money-lenders**

In the 19th century the case with which the money-lender could lodge his debtor in prison even on the strength of a fictitious document had led to the Deccan Riots. These were followed by the Deccan Agricultural Relief Act, which abolished arrest and imprisonment for debt. This reduced the aggravating nature of the money-lenders' grip over the peasants. Similar acts restricting the transfer of land to non-agriculturists, especially in the Punjab,

were directed towards the same goal. These reforms did not touch the problem of the indebtedness of the peasants, the causes of which are (1) the rigidity of the Government revenue demands, (2) the small size of the peasant holdings, and (3) over-pressure on agriculture.

### Co-operatives

Indebtedness, however, is a brake on agricultural improvement. Many civil servants have expressed themselves in favour of "substituting organised credit for that of the money-lender." (Sir F. Nicholson). The step in this direction was taken in 1904 when the first Co-operative Societies Act was passed. The progress made within 14 years was almost negligible. In 1913-14 there were:

Number of Societies	Number of Members	Loans issued to members and to other Societies
14,881	695,998	50,417,310

Most of these societies were agricultural credit societies. The total sum given as loans is nothing compared to the enormous figure for the total agricultural debt for British India, which according to the estimate of Sir Edward Maclagan was Rs. 300 crores in 1911.

The Co-operative Movement in India "Has been from the first largely a movement grown under official patronage and guidance" (Gadgil, *ibid*, 249). The Government directly invests in these societies under the cover of "State aid" and through it keeps the entire financial control of the movement in its own hands. In this way it is able to centralise the capital of the village middle class who alone take advantage of this movement and guide it in channels suited to its own purpose. There are no sale or productive co-operatives in India. The co-operatives as they exist do not offer the peasant any protection against the trader and the middle men. At best they are calculated to substitute the village money-lender, and even this function they discharge only to a very limited degree.

### **Irrigation**

The Famine Commission of 1901 enunciated the policy of pushing forward the erection of irrigation works especially for protection against famines. The total area under irrigation doubled itself during the period between 1894-95 and 1913-14. The area under irrigation in 1913-14 was 46.8 million acres as against 23.8 million acres in 1894-95. It is true that more crop is produced in the irrigated area than in the non-irrigated, but the surplus is appropriated by Imperialism in the form of irrigation tax and other dues. Irrigation schemes have been the best capitalist investments for British Imperialism. According to India in 1927-28 "The total capital outlay on irrigation and navigation work, including works under construction, amounted at the end of the year 1927-28 to Rs. 115.3 crores. The gross revenue was Rs. 12.1 crores and the working expenses were Rs. 4.7 crores. The net return on capital is therefore 6.4 per cent" (Page 112).

The capital outlay includes works under construction, which do not as yet bring any income. Hence the actual return on capital is much higher than 6.4 per cent.

The high water rates which the peasant is required to pay in the irrigated areas force him to grow "the more remunerative and specialised crops intended for the outside market, Indian or Foreign". Irrigation has thus "helped the movement of commercialisation of agriculture and very definitely encouraged the tendency of growing for the market as against growing mainly for home consumption" (Gadgil, *ibid*, Page 153). This subjects the Indian peasants directly to the exploitation of the wholesale merchant and indirectly to that of the bank magnates who manipulate the world prices of raw material.

### **Railways**

The growth of railways under Imperialism assists in the same process, namely the subjection of the peasant to indirect exploitation by the commercial Capitalism of foreign countries. According to Gadgil "the direct effects of railway extension were the levelling of prices especially those of food grains throughout India, the growth of large export trade in raw agricultural produce,

and in a certain measure the extension of the cultivation of crops intended for export". (Page 146.) The same result was predicted much more clearly by Marx in his famous "Indian Letters". "I know", he said, "that the big capitalists of England are today conferring on India the blessing of railways for the sole purpose of obtaining for their factories cotton and other raw material at a reduced price". The "nationalised" railways in the hands of British Imperialism are not an instrument for the development of industries which could relieve the pressure on agriculture, but for the indirect exploitation of the peasants by commercial capital.

### **Agricultural Departments**

Agricultural Departments came into existence at the beginning of this century. Similarly agricultural research institutes and agricultural colleges were started during the first fifteen years of this century when very little progress was achieved. The attention of these institutions was chiefly directed to the improvement in the cultivation of export crops, such as cotton, jute, tea etc. These improvements did not touch the staple agricultural produce of India, namely food grains. The backwardness of agricultural technique as compared with other advanced countries like U.S.A. can be seen by the figures of the yield of agricultural produce per unit area under cultivation. The following figures are taken from the International Year Book of Agricultural statistics, as quoted by Shah and Khambatta, *ibid*, Page 314:

	France	U S.A.	Egypt	India
Rice	—	—	27.2	15.7
Wheat	16.5	—	—	6.5
Cotton	—	—	2.7	1.1
Oilseed	—	4.4	—	3.0

(for 1909-1921)

The much boasted work of these agricultural departments and research institutes, can never reach the broad masses of the peasant cultivators. The only concrete achievement which stand to the credit of these departments are the developments of commercial and specialised crops like tea, coffee etc., which are grown in



plantations by British capital with the help of the semi-slave labour of the Indian workers. The total yield of the tea crop in 1921-22 was 274 million tons as against 197½ million tons for 1900.

### **The Objective of these Improvements—Normalised Exploitation**

The total acreage in the beginning of the century was 199,708 thousand acres (1901-02) as against 223,862 thousand acres for 1927-28 (Statistical Abstract 7th Issue 1930), an increment of about 10 per cent. The rise in the rural population between 1901-21 was also about 10 per cent. The total yield of the agricultural produce has not increased except in the case of cotton, jute and tea. The Simon Commission (Part I, page 18) points out that the export trade of India in agricultural produce has tremendously increased and has tremendously enlarged. The greater volume of exports is contributed by agricultural products like cotton, jute, oil seed, wheat and tea. The total value of the exports have risen from £ 70 millions in 1898 to £ 262.5 millions in 1926-27. This is no doubt a satisfactory result from the point of view of British finance capital which pockets the entire profits of this export trade in the form of (1) freight charges, (2) payments on account of banking commissions, and (3) interest on foreign capital invested in agricultural enterprises such as irrigation, plantations etc. The surplus produced by the cultivator does not go to enrich the soil in the form of agricultural improvements, nor to the development of indigenous industries, which could relieve the pressure on agriculture. Thus the stranglehold of British finance capital over the entire economy of India leads to the pauperisation of its toiling millions, and the stagnation of its agriculture and industries. The "improvements" of the last three decades were in the main directed towards the normalisation of Indian agriculture, and towards repairing the harm done by the shameless plunder and robbery of British rule. The essence of the agrarian policy of Imperialism is to convert India into the agrarian hinterland of Great Britain. India is asked to retain its place in the Commonwealth of Free Nations—"the British Empire, as the slave producer of the raw materials needed for British industries. Further this monopolist control over the agricultural produce of

such a vast continent as India adds to the strength of British Imperialism in its economic fight with other Imperialist countries who do not possess colonies or whose colonies do not produce the products of India

### **The Immanent Contradiction of the Agrarian Policy of Imperialism**

Does this mean that India is ever going to remain the bulwark of the supremacy of British finance capital in the world? Will British finance capital with its new fangled schemes of 'Empire Unity' and "Empire Free Trade" be able to develop the agrarian technique and the agrarian economy of India, even in its own interests and at the expense of the exploited peasants of India and thus strengthen its position at home and abroad? The answer to these questions is given by the historical development of Imperialism itself, and it is an emphatic no

In the very process of the opening up of India to new forms of exploitation British Imperialism was forced to unify India. The minimum of constructive activity railways, harbours etc. which was indispensable both for military domination in the country and for guaranteeing the uninterrupted activity of the taxation machine as well as the trading needs of Imperialist countries has created the proletariat which is now making itself felt as an independent political force. The introduction of capitalist economy has deepened the class cleavage between the landlord and the tenant the money-lender and the peasant in debt the planter and the labourer. As a safeguard against these potential revolutionary forces Imperialism has to keep up the whole strata of parasitic classes living by a pre-capitalist mode of exploitation. The zamindars taluqdars, rajas and princes have all to be maintained as a bulwark of reaction and counter-revolution. The existence of feudal land-lordism, whose interest in agriculture does not go beyond extorting high rents, is a great hindrance for the development of capitalist landlordism and the growth of large scale farms worked by machinery. The feudal proprietary rights which have been preserved by Imperialism to cement its alliance with counter-revolutionary forces, are themselves fetters on the expansion of agrarian production. Stagnating agrarian production

means insufficient accumulation—means insufficient reserves for Imperialism to draw upon in time of war. It further entails decrease in the purchasing power of the peasantry which spells decline of trade. The class conflict between the vast majority of the cultivating peasants and their feudal capitalist exploiters, zamindars, money-lenders and the Government, becomes ever sharper. Every recurring trade depression brings with it the ever growing menace of an agrarian revolution. Such is the vicious circle in which the Imperialist economy is condemned to stifle itself.

### **The War and Post-War Crisis illustrates this Contradiction**

The Imperialist war of 1914-18 and its aftermath brought out this contradiction very clearly. During the war years British Imperialism drew heavily upon India's resources of men, munitions and money and of raw materials. Industries connected with the manufacture of raw materials received an impetus. The stoppage of imports from the warring countries and the difficulties of shipping facilitated the growth of Indian industries. Prices of industrial goods rose very rapidly, export of raw materials, wheat, cotton, etc. increased and the prices of agricultural products rose but not so rapidly as those of industrial goods. This disparity of prices first affected the labouring classes on land, plantations and factories. There were strikes and disturbances on the Assam Tea Plantations. This disparity also affected the peasants. During the years 1917-18 there was a series of peasant disturbances in the north and in Bihar. After the conclusion of the war the prices of industrial goods continued to rise, while those of agricultural products fell. This contradictory trend of prices was characteristic of world price movements during this period. In fact this price movement was characteristic of the post-war crisis in Europe and formed the economic background of a series of revolutions of the working-class which took place during that period. This revolutionary ferment was not without effect on India. The nationalists launched the Non-Cooperation Movement as a protest against the reforms of 1919. For the first time in history the nationalist movement made

an appeal to the broad masses of the peasantry. The peasantry which was already driven to desperation by the acute agrarian crisis responded more enthusiastically than their leaders had bargained for. While Mr Gandhi was making his non-violent laboratory experiment at Bardoli, the peasant disturbances in Oudh assumed the proportions of an insurrection. In Oudh the actions of the peasants were well organised. They were directed against the rich landlords. Houses were burnt, estates looted. The revolt was crushed by the military. The last of the series of agrarian risings of this period was the Moplah rising on the coast of Malabar. It was the revolt of Mohammedan poor peasants against the Hindu landlords and money-lenders.

The agrarian disturbances and risings of 1919-21 were the first rumblings of an agrarian revolution. What prevented them from spreading and uniting into an agrarian revolution was the want of a nation-wide political movement with an agrarian programme. The working class was just learning to fight its own battle and was still unorganised and not politically conscious enough to take the lead. The nationalist movement, as we shall see, was led by capitalists and landlords, or by men whose sympathies were with this class. This movement betrayed the peasantry as soon as they rose against their immediate exploiters—the zamindars, money lenders and the Government. The bourgeois nationalist leaders delivered the peasantry to the tender mercies of the Imperialist hangmen who did their job thoroughly.

### **The Immediate Legislative Measures against this Crisis**

After the Imperialist hangmen and murderers had helped to tide over the crisis, the Imperialist legislature and the politician sat down to hatch safeguards and schemes for the future. The immediate legislative measures adopted to pacify the tenants and labourers were (1) amendments to labour laws obtaining in Assam Tea Plantations; (2) the Champaran Tenancy Act and (3) the Usurious Loans Act of 1918 and the Oudh Rent Act. These alone were not sufficient. New steps had to be taken, a new policy enunciated, for the expansion of agricultural production for the expansion of the Indian market, and for the averting of an agrarian revolution.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture was appointed to discover means of increasing the agricultural productivity of India and thus providing an extended market for British industrial imports. The Agricultural Commission was not appointed with a view to solve the agrarian problem. On the contrary the real question of landownership was expressly excluded from its terms of reference, which stated that "It will not be within the scope of the Commission's duties to make recommendations regarding the existing system of landownership and tenancy or of assessment of land revenue and irrigation charges"

The Report of this Commission which was published in 1928 recommended the introduction of modern methods of agriculture, better seeds, chemical manures, use of machinery, organised agricultural marketing, co-ordinated and centralised agricultural research opening up of model farms etc. This is an excellent programme. But these improvements necessarily pre-suppose large scale farming. Only large, consolidated holdings would lend themselves to the introduction of these modern methods. Thus naturally these improvements can only be taken advantage of by big landholders, landlords and money-lenders.

Whether, under the guidance of the Government, feudal landlordism or at least a part of it gets transformed into capitalist landlordism or not, is a question for the future to answer. But one thing is clear. The growth of large scale farming worked by machinery would necessarily mean mass expropriation of peasants from their lands. We are not against large scale farming by machinery.

We know that large scale farming must ultimately triumph over primitive small scale agriculture. But under Imperialism with its fixed policy of retarding industrialisation, these unemployed masses of peasants would not find employment. This would mean a further lowering of the standard of life of the poor and the landless peasants. At best these measures may help to create a thin stratum of rich peasants at the expense of the broad masses of peasantry, as was the case in pre-revolutionary Russia under the Stolypin Reforms of 1906. But up to the present very little has been achieved in this direction, and before anything has been done India is again caught in the vortex of another world

depression The distress among the peasantry is great at the present moment, owing to the low prices of agricultural produce The menace of an agrarian revolution is again looming large on the political horizon

The central purpose of the recommendations of the report is to solve the question of the expansion of the inner market and to devise ways and means to prevent agrarian revolts The expansion of the inner market requires an increase in the productivity of the soil—i.e., improved agricultural methods, better seeds, the use of machinery etc These changes, as we have said, can be effected on the basis of a large-scale capitalist agriculture India has big landlords, but these do not carry out large scale modern agriculture Their land is split up into small parcels which are cultivated by tenants using the most primitive methods of production Big landlordism has been created in India by British Imperialism by the transformation of tax-collectors, *rajahs*, *malguzars* etc into landlords, and peasants into tenants In order to shave off the peasant revolt consequent upon the increasing exploitation of the tenants so created by their landlords the British Government had to frame a series of protective legislations for the tenants Thus arose a veritable maze of landlord-tenant relations of a feudal character which are an obstacle in the path of the creation of large scale capitalist agriculture The authors of the report have this difficulty clearly in view They realise that the process of the transfer of land from the hands of the peasants to those of the money-lenders and capitalists is taking place but they deplore the fact that the new landlord looks only to the rent he can collect The Report goes on to say "The complaint, that the larger landlords do little for the development of their estates on modern scientific lines is a very general one, and the honourable exceptions to be found in every province are so few in number as not to do more than throw into relief the apathy of the majority In their defence it may be pleaded with some truth that, in some provinces, the system of tenure, or the Tenancy Law restrains them from unrestricted possession of a compact area, and in others prevents them from securing a full and fair return from the proceeds of their enterprise" (Report, page 425)

The question of the expansion of the inner market is the question of the development of capitalist agriculture and this latter question immediately comes up against the maze of the existing semi-feudal relations on land. In the period of bourgeois revolutions in Europe (in the 18th and the 19th centuries) the preconditions for the development of capitalist agriculture were created by the revolutionary destruction of the feudal relations on land but the Imperialist bourgeoisie, which has to rely for its colonial dominations mainly on reactionary feudal classes, cannot be expected to think of this path. The authors of the Imperialist Commission's Report suggest a path of reform.

Questions of tenure have been expressly excluded from our terms of reference but we suggest, where existing systems of tenure or tenancy laws operate in such a way as to deter the landlords who are willing to do so from investing capital in the improvement of their land, the subject should receive careful consideration with a view to the enactment of such amendments as may be calculated to remove the difficulty. We make this suggestion as it is from the bigger landlords only that the inauguration of improvements beyond the financial capacity of small tenants or of small holders, can come. If as a result of increasing interest in agricultural development, any desire to undertake work of this character become evident, we consider that the legal obstacles should be removed and replaced, where necessary, by legislative encouragement " (Report, page 426 )

This path, which the Royal Commission proposes, aims at the creation of a thin stratum of capitalist zamindars organising large scale farms on their lands, at the expense of the poor and rightless tenants. Such a development would mean the painful expropriation and enslavement of the majority of the peasantry. Hundreds and thousands of life tenants and tenants at will be driven from the land without having the slightest chance of being accommodated in industry.

The greatest difficulty in the way of any scheme of agricultural improvement is the financing of agricultural production. The Co-operative Movement has made great progress in the years after the War. According to the Agricultural Commission the

proportion of members of agricultural societies to the total number of families in the rural areas are as follows

Punjab 10.2 per cent

Bombay 8.7 per cent

Madras 7.9 per cent

In other provinces it is less than 4 per cent and in U P 1.8 per cent (Gadgil, *ibid.*, page 247)

The capitalist co-operatives, as we have already said, have done nothing beyond replacing the money-lenders and that too to an insignificant degree. The Co-operative Movement in India has none of the advantages of the Liberal Bourgeois Co-operative Movement in Europe before the War. Sale societies are few and far between. Consumers' societies and co-operative production are totally absent in India. The greater part of the financing of agriculture is still done by the mahajan. Hence Imperialism may attempt another method of financing agriculture under its hegemony by making the mahajan the village agent of the Imperial Bank, and regulating his financial activities by legislation. This rationalisation of feudal usury is recommended in the various reports of the recent Banking Inquiries. It will no doubt enable British Imperialism to get better and wider control of financing agriculture. It will assist the process of capitalisation of agriculture and cement the union between the class enemies of the peasantry, the mahajan and the Imperialist Banks. It will in no way lighten the load of the exploitation of the peasantry, neither will it avert the recurrence of an agrarian crisis.

The question which arises in connection with the agrarian policy of Imperialism is as follows:

Will the development of large-scale agriculture take place inside the frame-work of the present Imperialist-feudal structure along the path of reform which Imperialism proposes? Or will the development lead to a workers' and peasants' revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, which will destroy landlordism, confiscate the lands of big zamindars, talukdars, malguzars and inamdars, give them over to the peasant masses and thus create the conditions for large scale agriculture, not under private ownership (Capitalism) but under collective ownership (Socialism)? The question will be decided by class struggle—and



by class struggle alone—not only in India but also in England and in the rest of the world. Whether the British civilian in conjunction with the capitalist zamindar drives the peasant from his land and thus creates room for capitalist agriculture; or whether the workers and peasants of India will drive away the British civil and military authorities, and the zamindars, and thus cleanse the ground for the building up of socialist agriculture? This is the fundamental question.

It is from this point of view, that we have to look at the Report and the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and in fact at the agrarian policy of Imperialism as a whole. The political and the economic significance of the report can be understood from this point of view. The net result of all these proposals can only be the development of Capitalism in the village, better tools, better irrigation co-operatives, artificial manure, more technicians and veterinary surgeons for the village reorganisation of grazing lands and forests, constructions of waterways and railways; better marketing conditions etc. All these are to serve the same purpose namely the development of Capitalism, the construction of large scale forms, creation of a thin stratum of rich peasants; and the transformation of rent-receiving zamindars into capitalist "entrepreneurs". This is the essence of the agrarian programme of British Imperialism in India. In this connection it is important to note that the authors of the report, while formulating this purely bourgeois programme, made it a point to set their face against all proposals which may be in the interests of the industrial development of India. As agents of British Imperialism, they took every care to further the interests of the industrial and commercial capital of Britain as well as those of the Indian trading and moneylending capital. For instance, the question of prohibiting the export of oil seeds was raised before the Commission. It was pointed out that the export of oil seeds entailed a loss to the soil in as much as the corresponding oilcake, which is a valuable manure, was thus exported out of the country. In spite of this consideration, the Commission has not only turned down the proposal of a total prohibition, but also advised against export duties on oil seeds. Similarly it rejected the proposal of prohibiting the export of

oil-cake Further it turned down the proposal to create a modern oil-crushing industry in India, which would export oil but retain the oil-cake to be used as manure in the country, with the remark that "the oil crushers in India would find themselves in competition with a well-established and highly efficient industry (foreign) and there is little reason to believe that their cost of production or the quality of their product would enable them to compete with that industry" (Report, page 88) This argument is obviously false Firstly India has 'cheap' labour enough and to spare, secondly the cost of transport of seeds, which goes into the price of the imported oil, is eliminated in the case of oil manufactured in the country itself and thirdly, the oil-crushing industry after all does not need such skilled labour, as is not available in the country The Commission in advising against the building up of a modern oil crushing industry in India is obviously protecting the interest of the four big British firms which control the trade in oil seeds It is protecting the interests of the British chemical and food industry which requires Indian raw materials and finally the interests of the Indian commercial bourgeoisie which is interested in the export of oil seeds and the import of vegetable oil Similarly the Commission counselled against the imposing of a prohibitive duty on the export of artificial manure and the creation of factories for the production of nitrogen fertilisers obviously for similar reasons

This is the last word of Imperialist policy in agriculture It cannot solve the agrarian problem because Imperialism will never touch the question of private property in land, because it pursues the set policy of preventing industrialisation It preserves and perpetuates all parasitic classes connected with the ownership of land and forms new alliances with them Under Imperialism therefore, the exploitation of the peasantry increases more quickly than the development of the productive methods The problem of the inner market is not solved by its partial reforms and its half-hearted palliative measures It cannot avert that radical solution of the agrarian problem namely—the agrarian revolution, which will spell its own downfall

### **Imperialism Cannot Solve the Agrarian Problem**

We thus come to the conclusion that the Imperialist bourgeoisie cannot solve the agrarian problem even in its own interest

It cannot evade the agrarian crisis and hence cannot avert the agrarian revolution. But we must admit with Marx that it has in spite of itself set social forces in motion and created the material conditions for a social revolution. Marx has said in his 'Indian letters' "Whatever the British bourgeoisie may be forced to do, it will never emancipate the masses nor better the social conditions. But what the bourgeoisie can do is to create the material pre-conditions for both."

### **Solution of the Agrarian Problem for the Peasantry by the Peasantry**

The next question we have to deal with is what other classes in modern Indian society are interested in the solution of the agrarian problem. The most important classes which are the characteristic products of the process of capitalist development in India are the nationalist bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These two classes by their very nature as revealed in their relative position in the process of production are opposed to one another. Their class interests stand poles asunder. In the struggle against Imperialism these two classes play essentially different roles. The nationalist bourgeoisie at its best plays an oppositional role towards Imperialism in order to extort some concessions and to strengthen its position as an exploiting class under the existing social order. The proletariat on the other hand can only serve its own class interests by carrying through the national revolution and thus creating the conditions for its own emancipation. The attitude of these two classes to the agrarian problem must therefore be fundamentally different.

Here we may be asked why we do not consider the agrarian problem from the point of view of the peasantry itself. That is obviously the most proper thing to do, and that is exactly what the party of the proletariat has done in Russia, and that is what the C. P. I. will do in India. Similarly the Workers' and Peasants' Party has put forth a programme and demands which voice the wishes of the peasantry. The nationalist bourgeoisie on the other hand, which has a different programme to ours, also claims to represent the wishes of peasantry. The bourgeois nationalist leaders have made clear times without number that they do not stand for an

agrarian revolution. The infamous Bardoli Resolution of 1922 is an example. In this resolution the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress "assured the zamindars that the Congress Movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights" and that even when the ryots had grievances. (A declaration to the same effect has been made by Mr Gandhi in an interview at Delhi soon after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed. It was repeated once more after his return from the second R T C when the Working Committee of the National Congress was discussing the so-called "no-rent campaign" in U P.) This would go to show that the Congress represents the wishes of the exploiters that is zamindars, and is opposed to the interests of the peasants. But it has to be admitted that the Congress has had a considerable following in the struggle of 1921-22, and wields even today considerable influence among the peasantry.

Which programme will the peasantry accept? The reformist programme of the Congress based on class collaboration or the revolutionary programme of the Communist based on class struggle? Which programme will finally emancipate the peasants from the combined exploitation of Imperialism, the zamindars, the traders and the money-lenders? Before we proceed to answer this question, before we go into a detailed analysis of the two programmes, it will be necessary to give a cursory review of the class structure of the Indian peasantry as it stands today.

### **Class Structure of the Indian Peasantry Today**

The census of 1921 mentions four categories of people supported by agriculture: the cultivators, farm labourers, plantation workers and rent receivers with their agents. Their relative numerical strength is as follows:

Peasant cultivators	173 millions
Farm labourers	38 millions
Plantation workers	2.4 millions
Rent-receivers and their agents	10.6 millions

Three distinct systems of land tenure exist in India, but as far as the peasant cultivator is concerned he is equally oppressed and exploited by all the three. In every province 90 per cent of the cultivators have to support themselves by the cultivation of small and uneconomic holdings. The trader and the money-lender, the universal exploiters of the peasantry, are present in each province. The introduction of capitalist economy in the village has, as we have shown, resulted in the growth of parasitic classes which play the role of the middlemen between the State or the zaminder and the cultivator. Generally speaking this class of idle rent-receivers is on the increase. The total number of rent-receivers in British India was 8.5 millions in 1911, their number had gone up to 10 millions in 1921. This class is growing in the regions of Ryotwari and peasant proprietorship.

### **The Poor Peasant—a Future Proletarian**

We have pointed out that the penetration of Capitalism in agriculture has made land a commodity. We have also shown how this process created, on the one hand, a handful of parasitic middlemen and on the other hand a vast mass of rightless tenants and poor cultivators, living on uneconomic holdings. The smallness of these holdings, the rack-renting of the landlord, the continuous rise of taxes and prices—these are the factors which are slowly converting the poor peasant either into a proletarian, a landless labourer or a bond-slave. The nature and extent of these changes in the class structure of the poor peasantry are determined by local conditions such as the extent of industrialisation, the system of land tenure etc. which differ from province to province. The process of the conversion of the poor peasant into an agricultural or industrial labourer is described by R. Mukherjee in his "Rural Economy in India" in the following words: 'Small holdings below the economic size would keep labourers on the landlords' estates without making them independent of the necessity of labouring on their landlords' lands. Thus the aim of the landlords has been to keep the holdings small and raise rents as high as possible. The machinery of

commerce neglects also the food requirements of an essentially agricultural population. At the same time the organisations of rural credits is upset by the introduction of exploiting commercial and trade interests. All these ensure a perennial supply of labourers from the fields to the city workshop "

This tendency of the transformation of the poor peasant into the proletariat is characteristic of capitalist development. Engels wrote in his book on the agrarian question that 'the poor peasant is the future proletariat'. Due to the very slow tempo of industrialisation the majority of proletarianised peasants are not permanently absorbed in industries. A considerable number of mill workers in Bombay and mine-workers in Bengal are cultivators, who still hold their small plot of land in the countryside and are heavily in debt to the village money-lender. Out of the starving wage which the city exploiter pays them they save a pittance to satisfy the greed of their village exploiter.

### **Serfs**

In areas without industrial development the poor tenants fall into a state of semi-slavery. Thus the Santals, Kols and the Gonds and other aboriginal peasants have been converted gradually from tenants into bondslaves, in parts of Bihar and Chhota Nagpur. Such serfs exist today in Sind and in the Bardoli Taluqa. In Bardoli Taluqa they form just less than half the population. Mr Mahadev Desai in his 'Story of Bardoli' estimates the total number of Dublas (serfs) as 30 to 40 thousands, the total population of the Taluqa being 87 thousands. He describes them as follows – "The Dublas, however, are a class apart, and there is little voluntary about their labour. They remain attached to their masters practically as then serfs." Father Elwin writing about the Dublas after his tour in Gujarat says 'They get into debt to their masters and have to repay their debts by work which often lasts a lifetime. Though legally free, they are not supposed to change their masters, and their spirit has become completely crushed. I have seldom seen a more pitiable sight than these serfs in a bondage far stronger and more degrading than that which

the British Raj imposes upon their masters "Bombay Chronicle" 15/1/31) There are no statistics available to estimate the total number of serfs and bondslaves in India. The law does not recognise slaves and serfs in India, although it connives at their existence. But the tendency of the class of poor peasantry to fall into virtual serfdom is undoubtedly present in India, and is a characteristic of capitalist exploitation of the Indian village which is accompanied by the preservation of pre-capitalist exploiting classes.

### **Agricultural Labourers**

According to the last census farm labourers form about 18 per cent of the total population. The land labourer gets the major part of his wage in money. A rise in prices of food grains and industrial goods affects him equally adversely. "The day labourer in fact got no advantage from the prosperity around him. His wages remain in good and bad years alike at the bare minimum which enables him to subsist." [Keatinge, *ibid*, page 68] These were the conditions of the agricultural labourer in the Deccan in 1825. They are today very much the same. The wages of land labourers vary from province to province. According to Keatings it was about Rs. 70/- per annum in the Deccan in 1912. During the last 13 years prices have risen far more than 100 per cent while wages have lagged behind. The labourer shares all the miseries of the industrial labourer without the advantages of the latter of being able to combine and resist the wage cut.

### **Plantation Labour**

About 14 millions of workers are engaged in the growing of special products, out of which 75 million are engaged in tea plantations in Assam. Agricultural labour on the plantations is highly concentrated. More than half of the total number of plantation workers of India are concentrated in Assam tea plantations. According to the Simon Report about one million labourers are concentrated in the tea plantations of Assam. The tea industry is highly organised and modern, while the methods

of exploiting the plantation workers which are in vogue there are most primitive and brutal. R. C. Dutt wrote about this oppression in the beginning of this century in the following words: "The slave law of India, by which labourers are imported into Assam and are bound by penal clauses to serve out their terms of contract, continue to mark the tea industry of the province with an indelible stain". (Page 522).

Very much the same conditions obtain in Assam today. Corporal punishments, violating of women workers, venereal diseases and the highest mortality figures, these are the characteristic features of these types of capitalist undertakings. Fenner Brockway in his "Indian Crisis" quoting from the Report of the British Trade Union Delegation in 1928, says: "The gardens of Assam are virtually slave plantations....In Assam tea, the sweat, hunger and despair of a million of Indians, enter day by day "

### **The Poor Peasantry an overwhelming Majority**

The exploited classes together form an overwhelming majority of the rural population. They are the poor peasantry, the farm labourers, semi-slaves and plantation workers. Against these exploited classes stand the exploiting classes, the Government, landlord, the zamindars and taluqdars with feudal rights, rent receivers and middle-men, money-lenders and traders etc. The line of demarcation between these great opposing sections is not everywhere very clear. Between these two great sections there is a section of well-to-do peasants of various gradations from the poor peasantry to the rich. The importance of this section lies in this that it is a buffer class between the two opposing classes. It has partial affiliations to both. Its predominance and influence varies in the different provinces, and this difference is one of the factors which is responsible for the varied character of the peasant movement in the various provinces. Its affiliations to the rich peasantry makes it believe in the possibility of improving its lot under the existing social order, and lends its support to the reformist peasant movement, sponsored by the bourgeoisie in the alliance with the possessive section of the rural exploiting classes.



In the case of such an alliance the agrarian movement will develop on reformist lines and will ultimately turn reactionary, leading to the strengthening of the exploiting classes. The middle peasantry as a whole has nothing to gain by such a turn of events. On the other hand it has everything to gain by supporting the movement of the poor peasantry, farm labourers, plantation workers, headed by the proletariat which is a struggle of all the oppressed against all the oppressors.

### **The Conditions and Class Structure of the Peasantry under the various Systems of Land-Tenure**

But before we proceed to consider the reformist and revolutionary solutions to the agrarian problem we will briefly examine the class structure of the peasantry under the different systems of land tenure which obtain in India. "There are three distinct systems of land tenure in India: (1) In Bengal, Bihar and a fourth part of the Madras Presidency, the Government has recognised the proprietary rights of the zamindars and fixed the assessments permanently. (2) In a large part of the U.P. and the Punjab and in the C.P. a similar class of landlords intervenes between the Government and the cultivating tenants, and is primarily responsible for the payment of revenue. The settlements are however subject to periodic revision. (3) In the rest of India the Government deals direct with the cultivators and discharge some of the functions of the landlord" (Simon Commission Report Vol. I page 385). The following table will make this clearer

System of land tenures	Total area taxed	% of total	Population total	% of total
Permanent zamindari	116 million acres	18	80 millions	36
Temporary zamindari	198 ..	30.5	82 ..	37
Ryotwari	334 ..	51.5	58.7 ..	27
Grand Totals	648 ..	100	220.7	100

Thus we see that in British India nearly one half of the land belongs to the zamindars, and the number of peasants exploited by them is 73 per cent of the total number of peasants. (Figures from Statistical Abstract, 1930, page 358).

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Bengal is the classical province of permanent zamindari. The entire land under plough, i.e. about 41 million acres, is owned by 95,000 zamindars (Shah and Khambata, page 303) who appropriate almost the entire produce created by 30.5 million cultivators (with their families) (K.B.Saha "Economics of rural Bengal," page 116). Between the zamindar and the cultivator there are many middle-men and rent-receivers whose number is difficult to estimate. The average holding as calculated by K.B.Saha (ibid, page 117) by dividing the actual area cultivated by the number of families of cultivators is 4 acres. The actual holdings of the peasants as ascertained for the assessment reports of 10 districts of Bengal comes to about 2 acres (ibid, page 117). According to the calculations of K.B.Saha, even 4 acres are hardly sufficient to secure to the cultivator the other necessities of life." What he can have is only bare nutrition for him and his family calculated in terms of rice. But these are average which show the intense poverty of the poor peasants who form the bulk of the rural population. An idea of the class structure can only be obtained by studying the distribution of holdings among the tenancy. Such data are not easily available. Mommen, the Director of Agriculture for Bengal, gives the following figures for the district of Jessore, which are instructive:—

Economic condition	Number of Families	Percentage of Total
Well-to-do	246	15
Poor means	493	30
In want	542	33
Starving	362	22
	<hr/> 1643	<hr/> 100

(The figures cover 10,019 persons in all)

This may be taken to be typical of Bengal. According to this total 85 per cent of the cultivating families are either very poor or living in dire want. The overwhelming majority of the occupancy tenants, as well as the tenants at will, are perpetually suffering from land hunger. "The village holding in Bengal is not large enough to attain the economies of production even under the present methods of cultivation." (Saha, *ibid*, page 120). The greatest obstacle in the way of any increase in the holding of the poor peasants is the feudal and semi-feudal rights of zamindars and middlemen. An effort to solve this problem without touching these rights is foredoomed to failure. The Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act of 1938 which enables the occupancy ryot to transfer his land, may, if it is assisted by Imperialism by the opening up of facilities for improved agriculture, (according to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, for example) result in the formation of a few middle size farms owned by rich farmers. This as we have already pointed out will not solve the agrarian problem but on the contrary aggravate it.

The enormous growth of sub-infeudation going hand in hand with the retardation of industrial development, has given birth to ties and affiliations between the urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie (middlemen, rich peasants etc.) The rural petty-bourgeoisie in Bengal is overwhelmingly parasitic and is interested in the keeping up of the whole structure of feudal rights. They are supported in this by the urban petty-bourgeoisie which in political matters is pseudo-revolutionary. This section has always sided with the zamindars against the interests of the peasants, and used its political prestige to undermine the growth of a genuine peasants' movement.

The United Provinces form another important region of great landholders. According to the Simon Commission Report, "the estates of the 'Talukdars' of Oudh number no more than 260, but they comprise 2/3rd of the area of Oudh and pay 1/6th of the land revenue of the United Provinces." The zamindars of Agra enjoy a similar position. This handful of "barons," as the Simon Commission Report calls them, appropriate almost the entire rental of the 40 millions of cultivators. The greater part of the peasantry has now (after the rising of 1921) occupancy rights,

"but the protection afforded by law is counteracted by the ignorance of the peasantry and by the delay and costliness of justice in the courts." Feudal tithes and cesses like *nazrana* and *bhents* still exist. The average size of the holding is 4 acres, which is below the size of the economic holding. Agricultural indebtedness is heavy and cumulative. Both these factors are leading to the growth of the class of agricultural landless labourers.

Analysis of the distribution of holdings, in typical villages shows that 80 to 90 per cent of the present holders live on uneconomic holdings. Rents are heavy and besides this "unrecorded rents and other levies of the Talukdars both in labour and materials also contribute to diminish further the profits of small holders." (*Fields and Farmers in Oudh*, by Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee, page 129). A considerable section of these small holders are "part time agricultural labourers who tenaciously adhere to holdings too small to maintain them, and who therefore supplement their income by working on other men's field." (*ibid*, page IX). Most of the part time agricultural labourers are heavily in debt (87 per cent in Sirs Chehri village, *ibid*, page 285). Many, like the Pasis, have been reduced to virtual serfdom.

Even according to bourgeois economists of the Lucknow University, which by the way is subsidised by the zamindars, the satisfaction of land hunger is the fundamental problem in the U.P. In "*Fields and Farmers in Oudh*" which contains investigations into the economic conditions of some typical villages in Oudh, the author come to the following conclusion:

"As long, however, as there is less land in the village than there are people clamouring for it, these evils are likely to continue in spite of the Tenancy Laws. It is the land hunger which is ultimately responsible for the economic status of the tenant" (Page 218)

But what these same economists fail to see is that their reformist schemes of "rural reconstruction" are inadequate to solve the problem. They fail to see that what is wanted is the total abolition of all feudal property relations in land, without which no equitable redistribution of land in favour of the poor peasants and the landless cultivators will ever be possible.

The class cleavage in the U.P., with its remnants of feudal tithes, cesses and services in very sharp. The line of this cleavage runs between the poor peasants, landless labourers and debt slaves on the one hand, and the zamindars and their agents and the mahajans on the other. Even the Simon Commission Report has to admit that "the opposing interests of landlord and tenant offer serious difficulties for the Government and the Legislatures." Recently Mr Mukhtar Singh (a zamindar of this place) and Mr Brailsford, a Labour apologist for Imperialism, have declared that an "agrarian revolution" was imminent in the U P (Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the Province last-year in his speech before the Legislative Council admitted that the agrarian situation in U P. was objectively revolutionary.)

The Punjab is a typical area of temporary zamindari. This system is known by the respectable name of "peasant proprietorship." Here the Government is the landlord and stands as the main and direct oppressor of the peasant cultivator. According to the investigations of Mr Calvert ("Size and Distribution of Agricultural Holdings in the Punjab" by H. Calvert), 71.5 per cent of the landholders cultivate holdings less than 10 acres, i.e. they work on uneconomic holdings, 58.3 per cent of these holders work on plots less than 5 acres. The ever-increasing land tax they pay to the Government is virtual expropriation. The division of land in the Punjab is as follows: 72.8 per cent of the area is held by 28.5 per cent of the total number of holders, 27.2 per cent by 71.5 per cent. 70 per cent of the peasants in the Punjab are thus poor peasants. A considerable majority of these poor peasants are required to rent additional land. According to Calvert "of the total area of 28,820,600 acres over half or 15,653,000 is cultivated by tenants paying rent." (ibid page 9) Apart from the rich peasant, who thus plays the role of intermediary land-lord, the other enemy of the poor peasant is the money-lender. Mr. Darling found that only 17 per cent of the proprietors of land were free from debt. The average debt is about Rs. 76 per agriculturist. The total debt is Rs. 90 crores and the annual interest charged on it is 13 crores or three times the total land revenue. This shows what a substantial share of the income of the poor peasant is appropriated by the mahajan.

Government measures to alleviate the indebtedness have been two-fold. Firstly the encouragement of co-operatives. In spite of

their rapid increase the total capital in March 1930 was Rs. 14 crores i.e. about 1/8th of the total indebtedness. Further they are controlled by the rich gentry of the village and in the main profit no other section. Secondly, the Land Alienation Act perhaps checked the transfer of land to the Hindu mahajan, but the mahajan has introduced himself inside the "agricultural tribe" itself. Government effort in the consolidation of holdings has been criminal. During 7 years 3.3 per mille of the total area under cultivation has been consolidated. (K.B. Saha, *ibid*, page 131) The policy of consolidation of holdings has been more successful in the canal colonies, which cover ten per cent of the area under plough in the Punjab. "The estimated area held in holdings of 25 acres and over is 66.5 per cent of the whole, as compared with the Provincial figure of 46.1 per cent." (Calvert, *ibid*, page 41). But even in the canal colonies the distribution of land among the peasants is as follows:

Percentage of total acres.

Under ten acres	10 to 25 acres	25 and over	Total
12.4	21.1	66.5	100
Percentage of total holders			
53.6	22.5	24	100

(Calvert, *ibid*, pages 12-13).

Thus even here more than half the holders are poor peasants in uneconomic holdings. At best therefore the Government policy with reference to the holdings as well as indebtedness is not to protect the vast majority of the poor cultivators but to create a thin stratum of rich and well-to-do peasants indebted to it. Besides, the canal colonies, as well as the entire irrigated tracts of the Punjab, from profitable capitalist investment for the Government.

Thus the poor and middle peasantry of the Punjab is exploited (1) by the Government in the capacity of a landlord and capitalist, (2) by the money-lender, and (3) by the rich peasants from whom they rent land to supplement their plots.

In the Ryotwari provinces of Bombay and Madras again the Imperialist State is the landlord. More than 80 per cent of the peasantry till uneconomic holdings. Bombay is characterised by

excessive sub-division of the land, which, as Dr Mann admits, has progressively increased under British rule " Dr Mann found that 81 per cent of the holdings could not under the most favourable circumstances maintain their owners ' He investigated the incomes of the holdings in the village of Jategaon-Budruk, and classified the families in three categories thus —

Group 1, Well-to-do, who could live on the income of agriculture alone, Group 2, those who have to supplement their income by some handicraft, Group 3, those with deficit budget (for the year 1925)

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Total number of Families	7	15	107
Surplus or deficit in rupees per year	+99	+170	-123

About 50 per cent of the poor peasantry has to rent land from the rich peasants or middlemen. In the Deccan the exploitation of the poor peasant by the middleman-landlord, who in many cases combines the functions of a money-lender, is enormous. The problem of indebtedness is very acute in Bombay. Dr Mann found in certain villages he investigated that the actual earnings in an average season are little more than what is required to enable the people to live on their own standard of life and also to pay interest on debts.

In the ryotwari provinces the line of class cleavage is again that between the Government landlord and the poor and middle peasantry. The influence of middle-peasants, that is those who grow commercial crops and employ wage labour off and on in considerable numbers, is considerable. This class is strenuously opposed to the Government, but owing to its affiliations to the rich peasantry and capitalists it is prone to follow the lead of the bourgeois nationalists. Its influence over the poorer section has been used to lead the peasant movement in Gujarat in reformist channels.

The most outstanding feature of the ryotwari tenure is the over-increasing land tax, which means the literal expropriation of the vast majority of peasants. To add to this there is the intermediary landlord and the money-lender. This state of affairs will ultimately make the united front of the poor and middle peasants

and land labourers against the Government, money-lenders and Khots (landlords) possible Repudiation of old agricultural debts, moderate rate of interest, graded land tax, and agricultural income tax and abolition of all other rents and cesses etc. will be some of the points of the programme of this united front

To sum up In the region of permanent zamindari, the overwhelming majority— poor peasants, land labourers etc. are still suffering from remnants of feudal exploitation at the hands of the zamindars and their agents. On the top of this comes the exploitation of the capitalist Government, of the money-lender and the trader. But the conflict of interests between the zamindar and the tenant (occupancy or tenant at will) is the determining factor in these parts. Any genuine movement for bettering the lot of the peasants means the flaring up of this class conflict. In the political mass struggle against the Government this class conflict will be the determining factor.

In the ryotwari areas, as well as in the region of peasant proprietorship (in the Punjab), the poor peasant is arrayed directly against the landlord. The class conflict between the rich peasant who lets his land and the money-lender on the one hand and the poor peasants and land labourers on the other, is also present here. But the intense and all-round exploitation practised by the Government landlord many times cuts across this division and makes the united front against the Government possible.

### **The Nationalist Attitude Towards the Agrarian Problem**

The attitude of the nationalist movement towards the agrarian problem is determined by the class composition of that movement. From its early beginnings the nationalist movement has been the movement of the Indian upper classes against the Imperialist Government. It has been the movement sponsored and supported by the class of Indian capitalists, merchants and zamindars. No doubt the nationalist movement has represented more or less progressive section of these classes. The moving force of the movement has been and still is the Indian bourgeoisie. This is revealed by the fact that even in its early phase the main planks of the nationalist programme were



bourgeois demands, such as protection to Indian industries, banking etc. We cannot condemn a movement by merely calling it bourgeois. The bourgeoisie in its early efforts at building up modern industry had to dissolve the feudal relations in land and had to put an end to or at least partially abolish many forms of feudal exploitation. This happened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe. But the young bourgeoisie of colonial countries like China, India, Egypt, etc. has grown up under totally different conditions. Arising out of the needs of trade relations of Imperialist capital it slowly develops into an industrial bourgeoisie. But it also finds ambitions, its desire for expansion and power, thwarted by the fixed policy of Imperialism to retard the growth of industry in the colonies. It is this conflict of interests which makes it play an oppositional role towards Imperialism. At the same time this very factor the want of an opening in the industrial sphere, has forced it to invest its capital in land and usury. Its immediate interests are so closely bound up with landlordism, with usury and with the exploitation of the peasant masses in general that it takes its stand not only against agrarian revolution but also against every decisive agrarian reform. The Colonial Thesis of the 6th World Congress, from which we quote the above goes on further and adds: 'It (the bourgeoisie of the colonies) is afraid and not without foundation that even the mere open formulation of the agrarian question will stimulate and accelerate the growth of the process of revolutionary fermentation in the peasant masses. Thus the reformist bourgeoisie hardly dares to decide to approach practically this basic urgent question.'

### **The Affiliations of the Bourgeois Nationalists with the Zamindars**

This passage correctly analyses the attitude of the nationalist movement towards the agrarian question. Before the war the nationalists, had no peasant programme, nor did they attempt to draw the peasant masses into the national struggle. In the last century the nationalist opposition was the undisguised supporter of the zamindars. R. C. Dutt, a bourgeois economist, who

successfully exposed the policy of the Imperialist Government in retarding the growth of Indian industries, expresses his admiration for the zamindars thus "They (thoughtful men) have recognised that, apart from the political gain of having influential bodies of men between the alien Government and an unrepresented nation of cultivators, the opinion and influence of such men belonging to the country and to the people, leaven the administration, correct its mistakes, resist its arbitrariness, and bring it more in touch with the people " This was written in 1903 This apologia for the zamindars is characteristic of the nationalist movement

The impetus which industrialisation in India received during the war strengthened the position of the Indian bourgeoisie and deepened its conflict with the Imperialist bourgeoisie In the protest movement against the unsatisfactory reforms of 1919 the nationalists for the first time made an appeal to the masses The vast masses of the peasantry responded because they thought Mr Gandhi was calling them to join in a struggle against their oppressors There was no agrarian programme put forward Nor did the Congress put forward any demands on behalf of the peasants But the idea of non payment of taxes, of non cooperating with the Government was put before the peasants Given the post-war depression, given the political ferment which was at its height in 1919-20 the struggle of the peasant developed along the lines of the class cleavage indicated in the last section In ryotwari areas the peasants as a whole proceeded to organise a no-tax campaign In the zamindari districts of Oudh and Agra the peasants rose spontaneously against the landlords Here came the acid test the movement the peasantry rose against the zamindars, the nationalists betrayed the struggle The Civil Disobedience was called off The peasant insurgents were left to the mercy of the Imperialist machine guns The Congress Working Committee came out with the famous Bardoli Resolution "The Working Committee advises the Congress workers and organisations to inform the ryots that withholding the rent payment to the zamindars is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country Th

Working Committee assures the zamindars that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights and that even when the ryots have grievances, the Committee desires that redress be sought by mutual consultation and arbitration "

This resolution lays down in a nutshell the policy of the Congress with reference to the agrarian question. The 'legal rights' of the zamindars are not to be attacked. Subsequently, as we shall see, the Congressites have always supported the cause of the zamindars, middle men and money-lenders in the legislatures, whenever tenancy or money-lending bills have been introduced. The nationalists deny the existence of class-struggle not because they do not see that it exists, but because they wish to put off the day when this class-struggle will take such an acute form, that it will not only overthrow Imperialism but be a serious menace to the indigenous exploiters. Thus the nationalist bourgeoisie must fight against an agrarian revolution—to protect its own interests. On the other hand it has to extort concessions from Imperialism in order to increase its share of the exploitation of the Indian masses, if not to establish itself as an independent class. For this purpose it becomes the more important for it to obtain support from the peasantry (Colonial Thesis). Nationalism cannot offer to the peasantry an agrarian programme based on class struggle. What it does offer them, is a semi-religious creed of non-violence and Satyagraha and a reactionary programme of Charkha Khaddar and village reconstruction. This has been up till quite recently the whole agrarian programme of the whole nationalist movement. Non violence and Satyagraha are to wean the peasantry from the agrarian revolution. Charkha and Khaddar to reconcile the peasantry to its wretched lot and village reconstruction to keep the peasants under the control of the nationalist agents in the villages of the zamindars, money-lenders and middlemen.

### **The Attitude of the Bourgeois Nationalists Towards Agrarian Reforms in the Legislatures**

The attitude of the nationalists towards agrarian legislation has been equally reactionary. We shall only give typical examples of legislation (1) against middle men, (2) against money-lenders,

and (3) against zamindars. We have already explained that the growth of parasitic middlemen in the zamindari areas is a fetter on agricultural production. The Imperialist policy of increasing agricultural production demands that the cultivating tenant be made secure on his land, and that the transfer of land be easy. Bengal Tenancy Amendment Bills have been brought before the Council since 1922. The nationalists opposed these bills, but not from the point of view of the cultivators demanding a more radical cure, but from the point of view of the zamindars and the middlemen. When in 1925-26 such a bill was pending before the Bengal Legislative Council, "Forward", the nationalist organ, wrote that they "will not object to giving occupancy right to the ryot while securing for the landlord at the same time simple efficient and equitable means for realising his rents." (Quoted from "The Masses" January 1926). It was not until 1928 that the Bill became an Act. In its final form it is quite favourable to the zamindar who gets a transfer fee every time the land changes hands.

The Punjab Money-lender's Bill (1926), which was directed towards rationalising usury by requiring the money-lenders to register themselves with the Government, was also fiercely opposed by the Hindu Nationalists. This time again they did not oppose it on behalf of the cultivators, demanding more radical measures against usury, but from the point of view of the money-lenders. Lala Lajpat Rai in his "People" wrote: "If the Bill is passed in its present form and enforced vigorously the blow aimed at 40,000 money-lenders of the province will hit a more numerous class. The restriction of credit on a vast scale that will be bound to result from an enforcement of the provisions of this measure will hit industry and agriculture alike". ("The Masses" June 1926) "The Masses" from which we take this passage, remarks on it that the Lala "in his anxiety for the already overflowing pockets of 40,000 individuals, forgets the rest of the 20 millions who are going deeper into the mire of misery and starvation "

The last instance is that of the Goalpara Tenancy Bill which was brought in by the Government to regularise the status of

tenants This Bill proposes an encroachment on the rights of the zamindars, which they enjoy in virtue of the Permanent Settlement The landlords of Goalpara naturally raised a hue and cry but what is curious is that the nationalists of Bengal supported the zamindars "The nationalist organ *Forward*" condemned the bill on the ground that it will destroy the ties of common nationality existing between Bengal and Goalpara ' (The 'Masses' December 1927 P 1788 )

### **Bourgeois Nationalist Leadership of the Peasant Movement in the Ryotwari Areas**

In the ryotwari districts the main class conflict is between the Government and the peasants as a whole The conflict between the landlord-middleman money lender bloc and the poor peasants is no doubt present but as the big landholder is also subject to an ever increasing land tax a united front between the big landholders, poor peasants, and the labourer-agriculturists, is possible up to a certain stage This is the reason why the nationalists have been more successful in organising some sort of peasant movement in the ryotwari areas The Bardoli struggle of 1928 is a typical example of such a movement The Land League movement arose out of the struggle and has a similar class basis

The tax strike of the Bardoli peasants in 1928 was not the first strike of that nature The General Administration Report of the Dacca Division for 1872-73 describes a peasants strike 60 years back (A C Das *ibid* page 567) But the Bardoli strike was perhaps the first strike of peasants conducted by a political party The nationalists carried on the struggle of 1928 in a right reformist fashion From the very beginning they put forward the demand for an "impartial" Government inquiry They made it clear that they "did not desire to embarrass or humiliate the Government " (Mahadeo Desai, "The Story of Bardoli", page 241) All care was taken not to give any political colour to the struggle Mr Vallabhbhai Patel said " This is no non-tax campaign launched for any political end," (*ibid*, page 152) During the actual agitation Mr Vallabhbhai Patel had to use all his

Mahatmic metaphysics to brush aside the class conflict among the peasantry. He told the peasants "The Sahukar is merged in the tenant like water in milk. The poor peasants however, who formed the backbone of the struggle, enthusiastically and implicitly followed their leader. The leaders took great care to direct this enthusiasm of the oppressed into safe channels. "Satyagraha" they were told, presupposes the living presence of God. The leader depends not on his strength but on that of his God " (Page 251). Then they were asked "to strengthen their caste organisations." The leadership of the struggle was so considerate, so constitutional, so free from the doctrines of class struggle, that the entire nationalist bourgeoisie supported it. The big bosses interceded on behalf of the peasants and the Government granted the demand for an impartial inquiry. The leaders declared that this was a great victory. Victory for what? Victory for the "principle that enhancement should be legal and just." The Broomfield report: it is true, cut down the proposed enhancement for certain villages, (about Rs. 28,000 a year) but upheld it in the case of others.

### **The Significance of the Bardoli Struggle**

No doubt the Bardoli struggle was carried out in a reformist manner. No doubt the nationalists stuck to their fixed resolve to keep the local and circumscribed character of the struggle (page 156). No doubt a broad-based agrarian programme was not placed by them before the peasants. But still, it has to be admitted that here we see for the first time the nationalists organising the peasantry (as a class) against the Imperialist Government and carrying out a struggle on their economic grievances. It demonstrated the possibility of a broad organised peasant struggle. These demonstrations filled the urban middle class with enthusiasm, and the slogan "Bardolise India" was raised. On the other hand this 'laboratory' demonstration of Bardoli was so spectacular that it was almost uncomfortable for the national bourgeoisie of the zamindari provinces. The 'Forward' of Calcutta "heaved a sigh of relief" when the settlement was reached.

### **Character of the Agrarian Programme of Bourgeois Nationalism**

The Bardoli success led to the formation of the 'Land League'. The General Secretary was Mr Mahadeo Desai, the author of "The Story of Bardoli". The programme or principles enunciated by this League reveal the true class character of the Bardoli Movement. This agrarian programme, if it can be called one, restricts itself to the Ryotwari provinces. The very first clause reads: "The proprietorship of the land vests not in the State but in the landholder or Khatedar, whether he cultivates the land himself or through his tenants." It has nothing to say about the rents which the Khatedar may charge from his tenants but demands that the rentals should not be used as the basis for fixing assessment. The method of calculating the assessment or the enhancement is no doubt a rational one. The assessment is to be levied on the net income (profits of agriculture) as land tax. We have already seen that in the Ryotwari areas the land is concentrated in the hands of the Khot, Khatedar or money lender. The two clauses mentioned above make it quite clear that it is the interest of these middlemen which the programme seeks to guard and not those of the actual matters of soil, not to say anything of those of the land labourers. The Land League Programme thus is the programme of the village upper class and for the middle class and takes no notice whatsoever of the interests of the poor peasants (who are mostly tenants), and the land labourers. It suggests a few administrative changes in the mechanism of assessing the revenue—does not even demand a reduction—and leaves the entire class structure in land untouched.

To sum up, the agrarian programme of the nationalist bourgeoisie does not go beyond the following points:

- (1) The technical improvement of agriculture,
- (2) Organisation of land-mortgage banks and other banking facilities to further the penetration of capital into the villages,
- (3) Spread of education,

(4) *Charkha* and *Khaddar* as a side line employment for the peasants,

(5) Panchayats on a caste basis, to ensure the ascendancy of the village bourgeoisie,

(6) Spread of cooperation; and

(7) Reduction of land-tax (Mr. Gandhi's "eleven points")

Most of these items are part of the Imperialist programme of agricultural reform. Against *Charkha* and Panchayats, Imperialism can have no objection. So the only point directed against Imperialism is the reduction of land revenue by 50 per cent as demanded by Mr. Gandhi in his "eleven points." This will affect the peasant cultivators only to a limited degree, and that too in the Ryotwari areas. But even with reference to this demand, it has been pointed out that the official Taxation Committee had recommended a substantial reduction in the land assessment in the Ryotwari areas (*Bombay Chronicle* 30.4.30, article by "Politicus"). Thus the agrarian programme of the nationalist bourgeoisie is in theory no better than that of British Imperialism. Both classes are intent upon preventing an agrarian revolution, and hence the nationalist programme, shorn of its metaphysical and sentimental verbiage about non-violence, *Satyagraha*, etc. comes very near to the Imperialist programme. A nationalist bourgeois professor whom we have quoted before, expresses himself early on this point. He warns the members of his class that "There arises the further danger of the class-consciousness of the urban proletariat being inculcated among the peasantry, and this already threatens to become a serious social and political menace." And then goes on to suggest that: "A great deal can be achieved by scientific farming and agrarian cooperation, but the social crisis cannot be prevented without some land adjustment and reorganisation of holdings and the rehabilitation of some form of real village self-government." (Radhakamal Mukerjee, "The Rural Economy of India," page 245).

In practice however, in its efforts to play a reformist oppositional role towards Imperialism, (to extort concessions from it), the nationalist bourgeoisie creates an atmosphere



favourable to the unfolding of class struggle—favourable to the organisation of a class movement of the peasantry, which alone, in alliance with the proletariat, will be able to solve the agrarian problem in India

### **The Lessons and the Review of the Recent Peasants' Struggles (1930-31)**

Before we proceed to consider how the proletariat proposes to solve the agrarian problem, we will briefly review the recent peasants' struggles which took place during and after the Civil Disobedience Movement. Such a review is necessary as it will throw into relief the attitude of the nationalist bourgeoisie and their political organ, the Indian National Congress—and serve to further exemplify the generalisations we have made above. The attitude of the nationalist bourgeoisie towards the peasant masses is determined by two contradictory factors: firstly by its desire to play the role of "the champion of the people" and to strut about as the "opponent" of the Imperialist Government with a view to extort certain concessions for its own class, secondly by its mortal fear of the agrarian revolution.

In the first N C O Movement of 1919-21 the nationalist bourgeoisie, under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi, for the first time succeeded in developing the Congress Movement into a mass movement. They made an appeal to the people and to the peasants generally to join in the political movement and succeeded in rousing to political consciousness large sections of the petty-bourgeois masses, both in the towns and in the country side. This movement as we have already pointed out took place against the background of a deep economic crisis. The call of the Congress to the peasantry penetrated deeper into the lower strata of the peasant masses, than the Congress leaders had expected. Peasant revolts against the barbarous oppression of the landlords, money-lenders and of the Government officials flared up at points of greatest pressure like the United Provinces. The Congress beat a hasty retreat and called off the movement.

The Congress for a time withdrew from the mass movement. It entered upon the period of Swarajist tactics. It entered the councils and the Assembly and attempted to prove the inadequacy and unworkability of the reforms from within. We have shown above what attitude the nationalists took towards the peasant question inside the Legislatures during this period. Their attitude, we pointed out, was generally reactionary, and determined by their desire to safeguard the interests of the rural exploiting classes, namely the landlords and the money-lenders.

The factors which forced the Congress and the nationalist bourgeoisie to abandon the path of obstruction within the legislatures and once again embark on the path of a mass movement were two-fold; first, the increasingly aggressive policy of British Imperialism, and secondly, the growing indication of an alternative movement, which was revolutionary in character and which threatened to seize the leadership of the broad masses of the workers and peasants and thus eclipse the Congress altogether. The aggressive attitude of British Imperialism found its expression in the economic field in the various measures taken to hinder the industrial progress of India and thus thwart the ambitions of the industrial bourgeoisie. In the political field, this aggressive policy found its expression in the appointment of the "All-White" Simon Commission. In the meanwhile there took place a phenomenal rise in the workers' movement as well as the youth movement. This was accompanied by the insistent demand for Complete Independence and the popularisation of the programme of National Democratic Revolution. The Congress itself was forced to adopt the resolution of "Complete Independence" at Madras in 1927 and with a temporary relapse at Calcutta in 1928 to reaffirm it at Lahore in 1929.

The firm attitude taken by British Imperialism in the negotiations of December 23, 1929, showed that the bourgeoisie was not going to get Dominion Status or anything approaching it for the asking of it. On the other hand the pressure of the growing radicalisation of the Congress rank and file, taking place under the influence of the working-class movement, as well as that of the terrorist revolutionaries made it impossible for the Congress to proceed

under any other flag other than that of "Complete independence". This was of course nothing but window-dressing. The Congress leaders always entertained a secret hope about the Round Table Conference. This is borne out by what Mr. Gandhi wrote in "Young India" after the Lahore Congress. Speaking about the December negotiations he said, "We broke on the central point of Dominion Status. Surely nothing would be lost by Congress abstinence from participating in the Conference (R.T.C.). If the British Cabinet mean well let those who have faith attend, and if they being anything worth looking at, from the Independence standpoint, the Congress will capitulate." (The "Hindustan Times" 21.6.30).

The political stage in 1929 was almost completely occupied by the struggle of British Imperialism against the revolutionary movement of the working-class, as well as the revolutionary terrorist movement. The menace of an alternative revolutionary leadership was particularly acute during this period. The Congress could not hope to retain its political leadership, and to play its vaunted role of standing between revolution and Imperialism, by merely passing resolutions. It had to do something more. It had to launch a mass reformist struggle in which it would get opportunities to strut about as the "Champion of the people," and to keep its restless rank and file busy in spectacular demonstrations, and which would materially assist in the task of disorganising the growth and consolidation of the revolutionary front. The purpose of the Civil Disobedience Movement which was inaugurated in March 1930 has been defined by Mr. Gandhi himself, writing in the "Young India" in January 1930. Mr. Gandhi said: "There is undoubtedly a party of violence in the country. It is growing in strength. They will listen to no argument,.....action alone has appealed to them. This appeal can only come from non-violent action. In my opinion it and it alone can save the country from impending lawlessness and secret crime. We are tightly pressed in the coil of violence. It is a sin to stop action that may prevent anarchy."

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31 was well thought out and planned. The Congress leadership knew very well that it had to restrict itself to spectacular demonstrations and the filling of jails and had to take great care to localise and control the peasant

struggles. The Congress had gathered sufficient experience during the past ten years especially in conducting a localised peasant struggle like the Bardoli of 1928. It had a network of Congress Committees throughout the country. It had at its disposal a cadre of reliable Gandhists trained in the Spinners' Association. With these pre-requisites Mr. Gandhi thought it quite safe to inaugurate a campaign which "would not cause destruction or involve bloodshed, but which would be large enough to make the impression he desired" (Gandhi's interview to a special correspondent of the "Daily Express" 22.1.30). In spite of this the national bourgeoisie realised the risk which such a campaign involved, but the risk had to be taken in order to crush the violent revolutionary movement, which Mr. Gandhi, according to his own admission "dreads more than Lord Irwin's wrath"; the risk had to be taken in order to retain the political leadership in the country, without which the Congress never could hope to make "the necessary impression" in the Round Table Conference.

The prospect of a reformist struggle of the Civil Disobedience type was before the Congress for more than a year. The Congress knew very well that besides the urban petty-bourgeoisie, it had to rally the support of the peasantry in order to be able to create the necessary pressure at the conference, about which it always entertained hopes. But in spite of this it made no preparations to organise the peasantry or formulate their economic demands. The Lahore Congress "inaugurated a campaign for Complete Independence" without an agrarian programme. No doubt a great deal of lip sympathy was expressed for the cause of "the workers in field and factory". Mr. J. Nehru declared from the Presidential Chair, that "real relief can only come by a great change in the land laws and the basis of the present system of land tenure" and in this noble work he called for the "co-operation of the big landowners"! In fact it is for this very reason that the Congress is unable to formulate the class demands of the peasantry, which must of necessity include the negation of the rights and privileges of "big landowners".

It may be noted here that Mr. J. Nehru tabled before the U.P. Congress Committee on 26-2-30 a resolution containing a peasant programme—which may be described as a diluted version of those

issued by the Workers' and Peasants' Parties in the past. In spite of the clause about compensation to the money-lenders for the cancellation of debts, it must be admitted that it was a much more comprehensive formulation of peasant demands than any hitherto put forward by the Congress. The programme, even as it was incurred the displeasure of even the "good" zamindars inside the Congress. The U.P.P.C.C. referred it to its Council and nothing was heard about it subsequently.

Mr J Nehru obviously did not mean business when he put forward the programme. He knew very well that these class demands of the peasantry could only be realised, not "in co-operation with the zamindars", but against the combined resistance of the zamindars, the bourgeoisie and Imperialism. Did Mr J Nehru utilise his influence to organise the peasantry on a class basis as preparatory to the coming struggle? He did not. The fact that it was necessary to organise the poor and middle peasants on a class basis for the realisation of their demands was not even mentioned in the programme. The representatives of the zamindars and capitalists inside the Congress had quite a different plan in view for the Civil Disobedience Movement and Mr J. Nehru certainly did not want to break with them. In putting forward that programme he was merely playing his traditional role as a pseudo Left, to shout a few radical slogans and in practice to implicitly follow the reactionary leadership of the bourgeoisie. [Quite recently in reply to the recent U P Government communique in connection with the recent ordinance, Mr J Nehru has disassociated himself from the idea of the expropriation of the zamindars. (speech in Bombay, 16 12 31)]

We have stated that the Congress started the Civil Disobedience Movement without an agrarian programme, without the formulation of the economic demands of the peasantry, without any proper organisation of the peasantry as a class. The Congress and the bourgeoisie were certainly aware of the importance of the peasantry. They knew very well that they could not hope "to make the necessary impression" on the Imperialists without in some way tackling the question of the peasantry. Mr. Gandhi himself said towards the beginning of the movement that, "Not what happens in the cities but what happens in the village will this time decide the

fate of India". (Young India, 17-4-30). But at the same time Mr. Gandhi, as the true spokesman of the bourgeoisie and the progressive zamindars, knew from his past experience that the vast peasant masses of India, under the grinding oppression of the Government, zamindars and money-lenders, form highly inflammable material. Drawing in the peasant masses in the movement on a countrywide scale would have meant the unfolding of class struggle—which may lead to agrarian revolution—and this had to be avoided. The participation of the peasantry had to be so controlled, restricted and localised as to evade all issue of class conflict between the peasant masses and their native exploiters. This was the central thought which guided the plan and the progress of the Civil Disobedience Movement from Dandi to Delhi.

The Congress organised Independence Day demonstrations on the 26th January 1930 all over the country in towns as well as important rural centres. This certainly made an impression on the peasantry. The general impression got abroad among the peasantry that the Congress was starting a war on the Government. The question of land-tax, rent irrigation dues and other taxes, as well as other major economic grievances must have immediately stood out before them. But the Mahatmic mind was working in quite a different direction. The Mahatma hit upon the salt laws to begin his Satyagraha with. It is interesting to note that as early as January 1930 in Bandavilla (in Jessore District in Bengal) the peasants who were opposed to the formation of Union Boards, as they extorted enhanced taxation without any corresponding return, started a no-tax campaign. "Liberty" of 25-1-30 reported that "A no-tax campaign was in full swing" and that in spite of repression "the villagers have determined to continue the campaign to a successful finish". The Bengal Congress Committee sabotaged the struggle and diverted it later on towards salt satyagraha. This instance shows how Congress was bent on avoiding even a partial struggle of the peasantry based on immediate and major economic grievances, especially in zamindari provinces for obvious reasons.

In spite of the fact that enough opportunities for the starting of peasant struggle on the basis of immediate and pressing demands of the peasantry were present in every province, the Congress

advised the peasants to restrict themselves to breaking salt laws. The U P P C C for instance towards the beginning of March 1930 recognises in its resolution "the fact that the peasantry in these provinces are in a miserable condition and have had to put up with a crushing burden of rent and other impositions and during the last three years have faced repeated failures of the harvests resulting in famine conditions" It further recognised that in spite of these conditions the peasantry were faced with an enhancement of rent ('Leader' 1/3/30) The U P P C C advised the peasants to await the development of the mass satyagraha campaign and finally counselled them to break salt laws

In the early days of the Dandi march, proposals were made in the various provinces to start no-tax, no-rent campaigns, campaigns against the Chaukidari tax and against forest laws—in short campaigns for the immediate and pressing demands of the peasantry. But all these were ruled out by Mr Gandhi in the opening stage of the movement. The A I C C which met in Ahmedabad on the 21st March, endorsing the resolutions of the Working Committee authorised Mahatma Gandhi to initiate and control the Civil Disobedience Movement. The same A I C C granted "emergency" dictatorial powers to the President to name his successor and fill up vacancies in the Working Committee and expressly laid down that the provinces so far as possible should concentrate on a civil breach of salt laws. Thus the A I C C the highest directing organ of the Congress, abdicated in favour of a Gandhian clique in the Working Committee which was to initiate and control a spectacular and useless demonstration to satisfy the enthusiasm of the petty bourgeois rank and file for 'struggle'. Even for the salt demonstration, the Congress thought it wise to dictate stages and safeguards specially in the zamindari areas. The resolution of the Council of the U P P C C laid down on 15.3.31 that "Salt tax should be broken firstly in selected areas under the special control of the P C C and secondly by local committees and by individuals."

It may be urged in defence of the cautious opening of the struggle that the salt satyagraha was necessary to train the people for the higher stages of the fight and that the Congress had a graduated plan of progressive struggle rising by stages to a mass campaign of

tax and rent strike of nation-wide character. This is obviously not true. If it was a question of training, it was surely not the question of training the masses. At the most it was a question of training a select cadre of Gandhists in the task of "controlling the struggle", that is sabotaging the struggle, wherever it would assume a mass and class character, and evading it in all rural areas of maximum class tension. The first news of the Dandi march and the Salt Satyagraha was greeted by the peasant masses everywhere as a signal for "war". There was an enthusiastic response from the peasant masses of the principal rural areas of U.P., Bengal, Bihar, C.P. and Gujarat. This was vouched for by the utterance of the Congress leaders themselves at that time. Mr. Gandhi stated that the manifestations of the Civil Disobedience Movement in Gujarat were striking but he sought to direct this enthusiasm in the picketing of liquor shops and cutting down toddy trees. Mr. Kidwai giving his impressions of Rai Bareilly stated that the enthusiasm of the villagers was inspiring. There were also clear indications among the local tenantry of their desire to take up the struggle on the basis of their long-standing grievances against the taluqdars, which he put down wholly to the instigation of the District authorities, who, he said, "had started the old game of trying to turn the movement into a fight between the taluqdars and tenants". In order to distract the attention of the peasants from their real economic grievances, spectacular demonstrations of Salt Satyagraha under the leadership of the "Good" zamindars and their sons were organised in Rai Bareilly (30-3-30). In C.P. although the suggestion of offering resistance to forest laws was made very early, the "War Council" asked the peasants to concentrate their energies on Salt Satyagraha first. Similar tactics were followed both in Bengal and Bihar as well.

The next stage of the movement begins with the permission given by Mahatma Gandhi to start Civil Disobedience of salt laws on a mass scale. This was after the completion of the "Dandi march" that is early in April. It is important to note that the majority of these mass demonstrations of the symbolic preparation of Salt were held in the towns. In the zamindari provinces care was taken to draw off young peasants enrolled as Congress volunteers to these towns to participate in Salt Satyagraha as well as in cloth and liquor



picketing. Naturally they were arrested in large numbers and sent to jail. Thus the Salt Satyagraha stunt in its individual as well as its mass form was a part of the well considered tactic of removing the active elements from the potential centres of agrarian struggle. It was a tactic not of developing but of disorganising the struggle. The tactic of "filling the jails" by making technical breaches of law and at the same time neglecting to direct the energy of the peasant masses in a serious struggle for their economic grievances, formed the essential feature of the plan of the Civil Disobedience Movement throughout. The Political Conference in C P seriously discussed on the 16th April the problem "how to compel the Government to make arrests"—as the Salt Satyagraha campaign there did not bring a sufficient crop of arrests.

The interview which Mahatma Gandhi gave to Mr Ashmead Bartlett and which was published in the "Daily Telegraph" of 5-4-30 throws a lurid light on the plan of the C D Movement. Mr Gandhi is there reported to have said, 'I have never wished to embarrass the Government. I have concentrated on the Salt Tax because it means to attack the Government only on those taxes *involving moral turpitude*'. Asked about his plan regarding the campaign for the non-payment of land tax, Mr Gandhi said, 'The Government can rest in peace for I have no intention of doing anything of the sort. I do not regard the land revenue tax as one involving moral turpitude. After Salt Tax we shall attack the taxes on drinks and drugs.' Obviously this interview was for the consumption of the British bourgeoisie and British statesmen. Mr Gandhi could not afford to say it so openly in India. But the plan of postponing, evading and disorganising the real peasant struggle was in essence followed by the Congress during the succeeding months.

The starting of mass C D of salt laws in the beginning of April, certainly brought the desired mass arrests, but it also brought in brutal repression and lathi-charges. The militant elements in certain cities intuitively resisted these brutalities. Calcutta, Karachi, Peshawar and Sholapur, one after another, became the scenes of heroic resistance and barricades. The terrorist revolutionaries of Bengal staged their "armed coups" in Chittagong during this period. Under the influence of the events in Peshawar an aggressive "Red

Shirt Movement" began in the N.W.F Province and across the border. With the rise of this wave of spontaneous risings, the Government promptly arrested Mr. Gandhi under Regulation III of 1818, and the Congress organisations were declared illegal in the stormiest parts. After the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel (a few days earlier), some villages of Borsad and Bardoli Taluqas started the no-tax campaign. It must be remembered that the peasant farmers of various villages of Kaira District were ready and pressing for a no-tax campaign but were held in check by the vacillating and non-committal attitude of Mr. Gandhi and the leaders. On 27-4-30 when asked if no-tax campaign might be immediately started in Bardoli, Mr. Gandhi said, "Ras (the village where Sardar Patel was arrested) and other villages of Kaira had resolved to do so. He left it to the discretion of the people themselves. It was a stage in the fight." It is important to note that while Gandhi was positive in advising the peasants of Gujarat to picket cloth and liquor shops and cut toddy trees and make salt he took up a non-committal attitude on the question of no-tax campaign.

D/- 12-1-32.

Under the pressure of events the Congress moved to another demonstration, namely Forest Satyagraha in a controlled and restricted form. On 22-4-30 the Late Pandit Motilal Nehru gave permission to the C P P C C "to start Satyagraha against the grazing laws". He expressed his hope to Seth Govind Das, the biggest zamindar of the province and an ex-Member of the Council of State, "that the movement will be well organised under his leadership before it is actually started." This advice was strictly adhered to in the beginning of the Forest Satyagraha. The first demonstrations in this connection were organised and led in Bihar and in the C P by local big zamindars. A silver sickle was generally presented on these occasions to the leaders, with which they inaugurated the symbolic cutting of grass in the closed area.

On the 15th of May the Working Committee discussed the various plans of the Civil Disobedience Movement and adopted, cautious resolution saying that the time had come for the inauguration of a no-tax campaign by the non-payment of specific taxes in certain provinces. But the Committee specifically laid down that a

beginning should be made by non-payment of the land tax in provinces where Ryotwari System prevailed—and the non-payment of the Chaukidari tax in provinces where this is levied such as Bengal and Bihar. Even this however was to be done, said the resolution, in areas selected by the Provincial Congress Committees concerned. The Committee explicitly warned against the starting of such campaigns in provinces not authorised by the Congress. Along with this the breaches of Salt Laws were to be continued. About the same time when this resolution about the no-tax campaign was adopted, Mr Gandhi was interviewed by Mr Slocombe (21-5-30). In this interview Mr Gandhi formulated his three points: (1) The terms of reference of the R T C should include the framing of a constitution giving to India 'the substance of Independence', (2) Repeal of Salt Act, prohibition of liquor and ban on foreign cloth, (3) Amnesty. The other seven points (out of his former eleven points) which include the reduction of land revenue, he was content to leave for the future. This shows how serious the Congress leaders were in organising no-tax campaign. It was more a threat than a plan of genuine struggle.

The resolution about the no-tax campaign was promptly replied to by the Government, by the promulgation of an Ordinance against any no-tax agitation. Police repression and terrorism in the rural areas started, and these blows fell upon a totally unorganised front. No preparation or organisation for the struggle was anywhere made, except perhaps in some villages in the Kaira and Surat districts, which had already launched the campaign. The police repression in the villages met in places with the spontaneous resistance of villagers and June brought the first crop of anti-police riots in rural areas. The scene of bloody clashes with the authorities shifted now from the cities to the villages.

From the month of July another important factor began to exert its influence. The effects of the world economic crisis became visible in India. The Bombay Stock Exchange Crisis and the closing of the share market was reported on the 12th of July. This was accompanied by the crisis in the Bombay Textile industry, the closing of mills and a large increase in unemployment. The main factors contributing to the crisis, it was stated, were the fall in cotton,

prices, accumalaion of stock and general trade depression. Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas in an interview to the press (the "Times of India" 18-7-30) stated that "In rural districts there was widespread distress which was becoming more and more acute." He added that, "The Government will have to give either takavi advances or some sort of doles to cultivators to enable them to subsist." Mr. D. P. Khaitan, President of the Indian Merchants' Chamber Calcutta, said that, "The prices of both raw and manufactured jute had declined to a level which was considered low even in the pre-war period. The producers were the worst sufferers." (The "Times of India" 18-7-30). Mr. Pir Mohammad Hussain, in the Punjab Council, quoted several figures to show that the price of wheat and cotton had gone down so low that the yield per acre was only Rs. 2 net after paying off the water rate, land revenue and local cess.

It was under the impression of these indications and also of the first serious anti-money-lender riot in the affected area (Kishorganj, Bengal), that the section of the bourgeoisie which stood for essentially same political demands as the Congress, but which discountenanced the C.D. Movement, sent its representatives, Messrs. Sapru and Jayakar, on the peace mission "to restore normal conditions." The congress leaders who were "leading the struggle" were not devoid of interest in these peace efforts. The Associated Press reporting the Working Committee meeting on the 30th of August stated with some justification that "indications were not wanting that the Committee was closely following the fortunes of the Sapru-Jayakar peace move."

The Working Committee meetings of the same date came out once again with a long programme for the coming months. Most of the items of this programme concerned only the bourgeois class and especially "the mercantile community", which was now lending its organised support to the C.D. Movement. The programme included withdrawal of deposits from Post Office Saving Banks and Postal Cash Certificates, (withdrawing support from British Insurance Companies, setting up of Arbitration Boards for business disputes, boycott of British goods, propaganda for the use of Swadeshi articles etc. The programme still spoke of "preparation

and inauguration of a campaign for the non-payment of land revenue or such other Government tax as the provinces may consider necessary or feasible." It is important to note that six months after the movement had started the Congress still talked of preparation and inauguration of a restricted no-tax campaign. And this preparation had hitherto consisted in sending its leading cadres by thousands to jail, by asking them to make senseless salt demonstration. The U.P.P.C.C. communique of 2.8.30 reported breaches of Salt Law, picketing of liquor and cloth shops, and not a word about the organisation of the peasant struggle. At the same time it had 1600 arrests to its credit so far. Except in a number of villages in the Bardoli Taluka no-tax campaign was nowhere seriously in progress.

About this time Forest Satyagraha emerged out of the stage in which it was practised by volunteers only. In C.P. and Bihar, it took a mass form. The mass of poor villagers, who are hit the hardest by forest regulations, went in enthusiastically for these demonstrations. The Police repression which followed in the wake of these mass demonstrations was met in many places with the stubborn resistance of the peasants, leading to bloody clashes. Several such clashes were reported from C.P. in September, the Chirner incident in Maharastra took place towards the end of September. At Chirner 5,000 villagers waylaid the police who had arrested the leaders of the Forest Satyagraha there. Firing had absolutely no effect on the villagers determined to rescue their leaders. The Congress volunteers and the leaders made futile attempts to check the violence of the mob and tried to save the police but failed. The Chirner experience was too much for the Congress. Mass Forest Satyagraha was abandoned in the Bombay presidency thereafter. But in spite of the Congress several mass riots in connection with the non-payment of forest dues continued to take place in the C.P., the Deccan and Bihar. There were riots in the C.P. where several thousand *goons* armed with spears and lathis participated. In the Deccan several thousands of Kolis occupied the Shivneri Fort and refused to pay the forest dues. (October 17). In Nasik District 4,000 peasants participated in a campaign of non-payment of grazing dues but were put down by armed police. The call to Forest Satyagraha appealed to the poor peasantry in those

parts where the closure of forest and the levy of taxes on grazing and gathering fire-wood in closed areas is a genuine economic grievance. But the Congress did not want to develop or organise a struggle on these partial grievances. They merely wished to make these senseless symbolic demonstrations to fill the jails. The moment the struggle growing deeper spontaneously took a serious turn, they dropped it.

The breakdown of the "peace negotiations" which took place at the end of September can be said to mark the end of the first period of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The main characteristic of this period is that the Congress leadership was able to develop the Civil Disobedience Movement almost according to its plan of staging a demonstration, filling the jails, evading a genuine mass struggle of the rural population and localising and sabotaging it where it could not be avoided. They began with the salt demonstrations which involved no inner class conflict nor involved a major economic grievance of the peasant masses. They developed these demonstrations from the individual form to the mass form and left off when a sufficient number of people were arrested. They served no other purpose but to divert the energies of the rank and file, who were eager for struggle, into safe channels. These demonstrations, even when they took a mass form, did but negligible damage to the Salt Excise Department according to the admission of the Government. They were abandoned as soon as they failed to bring the awaited crop of arrests or led to anti-police riots. Similar tactics were adopted with reference to Forest Satyagraha which we have described above. Resolutions about no-tax campaign were passed, but it was not allowed to develop anywhere seriously except in Bardoli with which we shall deal presently. The centre of gravity of the spontaneous risings of this period lay more in the urban areas than in the rural ones. No doubt the beginnings of the agrarian crisis made themselves felt towards the end of this period. The first anti-money-lender and anti-zamindar riots took place in Kishorganj, Sukkur and Islampur. It was under the impression of these indications that the liberal bourgeoisie initiated the peace negotiations. The negotiations failed. Both the Congress and the Government were unwilling to yield. The Government did not yield because it was not yet faced with the serious situation (with which

it was faced 5 months later) created by the combination of an acute agrarian crisis with an unorganised but continuous political ferment. Of course the yielding demanded of the Government has to be understood in relation to the Congress demand itself, which was nothing but an elastic formulation of the terms of reference to the R T C. The Congress did not yield because they felt they had not exerted the "maximum" pressure. They were encouraged by their success in keeping up large political demonstration, and at the same time being able to avoid serious class conflicts. There was no organised revolutionary party in the field to take advantage of the political ferment and develop a revolutionary mass struggle. The agrarian crisis had not developed so far as to intensify the menace of spontaneous mass revolts of the rural exploited classes. The third factor which strengthened the Congress and which was not present in the first N C O Movement of 1919-21, was the organised support which it obtained from those sections of the bourgeoisie which generally stood aloof from the Congress. The Indian mercantile community solidly supported the Congress. The President of the Ahmedabad Mill-owners' Association stated (the "Times of India" 26-7-30) that "Wise statesmanship demanded a bold policy of conciliation based on compromise with Mahatma Gandhi." And latter it refused to send its representatives to the Legislatures as protest against the arrest of Mr. Gandhi. The Bombay Native Piece Goods Merchants' Association declared "a hartal for an indefinite period from 26-7-30 as a protest against the repressive policy of the Government." The Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce refused to support the R T C. This organised bourgeois support moral as well as material, together with the other reasons given above, enabled the Congress to postpone its capitulation in September and continue the movement for another five months.

The concluding five months of the C D Movement may be said to form the second period. The decisive and dominating factor in this period was the rapidly deepening agrarian crisis. The Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce, in its correspondence with the Government of India, gave striking figures of the phenomenal fall of prices of cotton, jute and wheat (16 10 30). Cotton price were stated to be so low as to be under the cost price of production

The jute grower could hardly recover half of his cost of production. In the case of wheat there was an unprecedented fall. The price fell from Rs. 3/8 per maund, (in March 1930) to Re 1/3/- per maund in October of the same year. It was stated that even the price of Rs. 3/8/- was unremunerative to the Punjab growers of wheat. This downward trend of agricultural commodities is borne out by the diagram prepared by Messrs. Rodocanachi and Co. in Bombay (The "Times of India" 29-4-31). According to this diagram the percentage drop in the prices of Broach cotton, jute and wheat between January 1930 and January 1931 was respectively 45 per cent, 50 per cent and 50 per cent. Distress among the cultivators was great and everyday increasing. A Talukdari tenant from Barabanki (U.P.) wrote (The "Hindustan Times" 16-20-30): "The produce of an entire holding is not sufficient to meet even half of the rent demanded, now if the cultivator should decide to pay the rent, there will be nothing left to support the family throughout the year." "The Statesman" of 30-10-30 reports about the distress among jute cultivators in the districts of Bengal: "The cultivators are putting up for sale all their worldly possessions, utensils, cattle etc. utter ruin stares them in the face. The cultivators in all the provinces were faced with the same fate."

The intensification of a wide-spread agrarian distress made the task of controlling the C.D. Movement, especially in the rural areas, very difficult. Attempts were made, in spite of repression, to keep up the demonstrations in the cities. The bourgeoisie who supported the movement offered material support to the Congress in this. Picketing of cloth and liquor shops, flag salutations etc. were organised in the cities to maintain the enthusiasm of the petty bourgeois rank and file. On the first of October the Bombay merchants made a voluntary offer to the B.P.C.C. to pay a sort of levy to the War Council to help the Congress Movement in the city. But in spite of these attempts the centre of the movement had now definitely shifted to the rural areas. The task of the Congress in this period was to continually dangle the threat of spreading a no-tax campaign in the face of the Government, to localise and control the campaign in parts where it had already been started (Bardoli), and to postpone and evade it in zamindari provinces (like



U P Bengal, Bihar etc ) We shall briefly touch upon the three most important features of the peasant struggles of this period, namely (1) the Gujarat struggle (Bardoli, Borsad), (2) the struggle of the U P peasantry, and (3) the spontaneous peasant risings of this period

(1) Certain villages of Borsad Taluka (Kaira District) and the Bardoli Taluka (Surat District) were the first in Gujarat, in fact in the whole of India, to launch upon a no-tax campaign during the C D Movement This they did spontaneously soon after the arrest of Sardar Patel and Gandhi The middle peasantry of Gujarat generally and especially of these particular talukas is strongly under Gandhian influence The peasants of Bardoli Taluka had carried out a no tax struggle against the enhancement of 1928 to which we have already referred The 'Bardoli' type of peasant struggle is characteristic of Gandhian reformism It attempts to avoid at all costs the class struggle against the local exploiters and seeks ultimately class collaboration with the Imperialist Government It appears that this form of struggle can be used by national reformism for some time with impunity in the ryotwari areas to meet its own purpose which is to keep up a demonstration and political ferment, while at the same time keeping in check the instinctive forces of revolt The reason of this is to be sought in the class structure of the peasantry of those provinces which we have already given in an earlier section The peasantry of Gujarat may roughly be divided into three classes middle peasants poor peasants and land labourers These divisions coincide more or less with the principal caste divisions, Ujalparaj, Raniparaj and Dublas The patidars who formed the backbone of the struggle both in 1928 and 1930-31 belong to the first named class The majority of them are more or less well to do peasant farmers who form a substantial minority of the entire population of the peasants of Gujarat The Dublas together with the Raniparaj form the majority They are either poor peasant cultivators and labourers or actual serfs who are actually exploited by the patidars, which is the economically dominant section owning the greater part of the land of the province All these sections however are faced with one big, all-powerful landlord, who has all the means of oppression, police etc at his beck and call that is, the British Government The major class

conflict in this province therefore is the one between the Government and the peasant population generally. Of course there is a section of big land-owners and money-lenders which always sides with the Government, but it is relatively insignificant, economically as well as numerically. Thus when the middle peasantry puts up a resistance against the universal oppressor, or carries out even the reformist struggle against him, it is bound to receive some measure of moral support from the section of poor and landless peasantry. The stronghold of Congress influence among the Gujarat peasantry is the patidar class of middle peasants. The Congress has never attempted to enlist the support of the Dublas and Raniparaj by espousing their economic interests. All they have done is to open a few ashrams, schools for them and done some "welfare" work amongst them. The influence thus gained over them was perhaps enough in shortlived struggles (like those of 1928 and 1930-31), to make them passively support the movement of the patidars. Attempts were actually made by the Government officials during the no-tax campaign of Bardoli and Borsad to stir those sections against the patidars but they met with little success. This rather lengthy explanation is given to show how a non-violent Gandhian demonstration of a no-tax campaign was possible in Gujarat without giving rise to serious class conflicts with the classes which support the Congress.

In spite of this, even in Gujarat, the Congress made no serious attempt to spread the no-tax campaign which had already been started in a few villages of Borsad and Bardoli to the rest of those Talukas up to the end of September. "The Times of India" reported on 25/9/30 that Borsad and Bardoli Talukas would be the first areas selected for the non-payment of taxes. The struggle assumed a particularly acute form in the months between October and January 1931. The land revenue in these parts is paid yearly in January and March. By the time the no-tax agitation gathered force in these talukas most of the dues were paid. In Borsad for instance all the dues for 1928 and 1929 were paid up except in the case of Ras and 13 other villages, which took the pledge not to pay the revenue towards the end of March, as a protest against the arrest of Sardar Patel. In Bardoli Taluka however out of the 5 lacs, the total revenue demand for the Taluka, 2½ lacs were due when the Movement

started there in June. Attachments and police repression began against those villages which had taken the vow not to pay the land revenue, as early as in June. Towards the end of September, the Congress began a systematic propaganda in these talukas with a view to organise the movement. The Government sent strong contingents of the Kitchener Police to these talukas and began an unparalleled reign of terror. The ashrams, which were the centres of no tax propaganda, were demolished and occupied by the police, houses were broken open, the inmates were mercilessly beaten and the property forcibly attached. In Borsad, where the dues were negligible, the Government ante-dated the payments which were due in 1931 and demanded them in October. Under these circumstances of grave provocation and most brutal repression, the Congress organised migration of the peasants to the adjoining territories of the Baroda State. About November half the population of both these talukas had migrated. The standing crops which they left behind were attached, their houses broken open and the contents destroyed or robbed by the police. Not satisfied with this, armed posses of Kitchener Police entered the Baroda territory and attacked the camps of the Hijratis and beat them mercilessly. Up to November the campaign was in the main restricted to Borsad Taluka in Kaira District and Bardoli in Surat. Under the impression of the heroic sufferings of the Hijratis and because of the approaching collection time, the no-tax campaign began to spread to other talukas. Jalalpur Chikhli, and Bulsat (Surat) followed suit in December. Olpad followed as late as in January. The only other places where the campaign spread in Gujarat were Nadiad and Anand in the Ahmedabad district and Halol in the Panch Mahals. Even in these talukas only a few villages were affected. Thus even in Gujarat, where for the reasons given above the Congress could guide and control the movement and effectively prevent it from developing into a class struggle of the peasants as a class against the Government, they were cautious enough not to spread the movement.

It is important to note that the movement here did not start with the formulation of economic demands of the peasantry and their correlation with the political struggle, against the whole system of Imperialist land tenure and thus against Imperialism itself. The Congress leaders never said a word about the inability of the

peasants to pay land revenue by the peasantry was that 'we shall not pay taxes until Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel are released. Many of them said that it was a 'fight for Swaraj', but generally added 'we shall not pay till Gandhiji asks us to pay', and in March 1931 he did ask them to pay without gaining anything for the peasantry of Gujarat! Economic demands were put forward by that section of the bourgeoisie which did not openly join the movement but lent its moral and material support. The President of the Indian Merchants' Chamber of Bombay addressed a letter to the Government, in which he referred to the fall of prices and recommended the case of the peasants of the two talukas for complete or partial remission. He condemned the police repression and the Government policy of ante-dating the payment dates. (Leader 19/11/30) Mr. Walchand Hira Chand speaking at the Annual General Meeting of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce demanded that the Government should altogether forego the land revenue for one year to save the agriculturists from the effects of the crisis.

The Bardoli struggle of 1928 was purely economic. The Congress leaders stressed repeatedly the point that it had no political implications. They studiously kept out the political issues. In 1930-31 they wanted to have a well-planned but localised demonstration for their own political purpose. The political slogans under which the struggle was conducted were merely 'This was a fight for Swaraj and Release Mahatma and Sardar'. The Congress could not afford to formulate the struggle on the basis of economic demands because in that case the struggle was bound to spread especially in view of the agrarian crisis. On the other hand the struggle was strictly localised and the energy of the peasants in other districts was directed to cloth and liquor picketing and Salt Satyagraha. The struggle was not conducted on the class basis but on a caste basis. It was the caste Panchayats which were used to bring social pressure on the vacillating elements. It was through the agency of caste Panchayats that blacklegging on the part of Raniparaj and Dublas was prevented. No attempt was made to bring in these two classes by formulating their demands as peasants.

Controlling the struggle through the Panchayats means controlling it through the most influential, therefore, rich members of the caste. A struggle which is in the interests of the majority of the poor peasants and toilers on land can never be conducted on this basis.

Another important tactic of the struggle was the Hijrat, the mass migration of the patidars to the Baroda State. Hijrat was effective in as much as it saved the patidars from the inhuman police repression. Hijrat together with the complete boycott of Government officers made it impossible for the Government to collect the revenue even by attaching crops, because there was no labourer available to remove the same. The Revenue Member of the Bombay Government stated that two lakhs had to be spent to recover half a lakh of arrears. Later on the police parties surrounded whole villages and tried to prevent migration by force. The importance of Hijrat to the Congress lay in this that it prevented violence on the part of the people and that it helped them to localise the struggle. The question of the Hijratists migrating to the neighbouring district carrying with them a vigorous no tax agitation never arose. In that case the no tax campaign would have spread like wildfire in Gujarat. It was the Satyagrahi tactic of merely withdrawing from their villages that is vacating the centres of conflict and avoiding actual resistance.

The plight of the Bardoli peasants after the truce is well known. Police repression continued even after the truce. Many of the lands attached were never returned. In this connection it was the smaller patidar peasants who were the losers, as the big farms which had been attached could not be sold. No compensation was given for the destruction of property, not to say anything about injury to life and limb. The Government instituted a special inquiry into the police oppression at the request of Mr. Gandhi so as to enable him to go to the R. T. C. and of course we know what came out of it when read the notorious Gordon Report.

(2) The Congress had to follow quite different tactics in the U. P. Here the main question is of rent, and the principal line of class cleavage is between the tenants-rightless or otherwise, and the big zamindars and talukdars. The tenantry is ground down not only by excessive rent, but even the *usual* methods of rent collection are inhuman and barbarous in the extreme. Over and above this the

zamindar exacts illegal cesses and forced labour from the rightless tenant. This being the common feature of the agrarian conditions in U P, the class conflict there is particularly acute and it is impossible to launch a no-tax campaign without its turning into a no-rent struggle against the zamindars.

The demand for a no-tax campaign was made by the U P peasants much earlier during the course of the C D movement itself but nothing except salt Satyagraha and picketing etc. was organised up to November 1930. The collection time in U P is November and then under pressure from below the Congress was forced to do something in the matter. The U P P C C review for the week ending 22-9-30 stated that 'The Council of the U P P C C has asked the different Congress Committees to concentrate their attention on no-tax campaign which includes land tax, income tax, punitive police tax and other similar direct taxes'. It was stated that preparations were being made in this direction. No-rent campaign of course was not mentioned at all (Hindustan Times 3.11.30).

The compelling force which made the Congress come forward 'for the preparation of the no-tax campaign' was of course the deepening agrarian crisis, which became quite apparent in October. The Secretary of the Board of Revenue addressed a circular to the District Officers in U P in which he asked them to carefully watch the agrarian situation. 'He stated that the continuation of the low prices for food-grains causes anxiety not only in regard to the present but in its possible reaction on the land revenue, if the downward progress is maintained. Information has been received that the results are already making themselves apparent in some districts for example in the relinquishment of irrigated holdings, and a declining resistance to ejectment' ("Leader", 20-10-30).

On 27th of November the "Leader" reported "acute discontent among the cultivators in the Allahabad District, due to the fall in prices". It stated that the tenants were being pressed by the zamindars for their rents which were falling due, but they (Tenants) were unable to pay because of the cheapness of grain. Numerous petitions for remission were being filed. Under these circumstances the Congress had to be in the field, not to lead a no-rent campaign

but to control and sabotage it. We have already given the resolution of the U P P C C with reference to no-tax. The actual formula about rent was that the Congress was to make arrangements with the zamindars that the tenants be allowed to pay 8 to 10 annas in the rupee and get a receipt for full payment. The Congress thus hoped to avoid class-struggle by making arrangements with the 'good' zamindars. Exactly the same demand was made by Mr Anand Swarup, a big zamindar M L C of Muzaffarnagar. In 'The Leader' 11.12.30 he wrote that "the Government should remit at least 25 per cent of the revenue to the zamindars and in turn ask them to remit double the amount to the cultivators."

It was under the stress of these events that the Congress had to get forward to head the movement in order to be head of it. As soon as agitation was started by the Congress, police repression began in U P. Meetings were broken up. Volunteers were beaten and jailed. In spite of the talk of spreading the no tax campaign, which was going on for months, no preparations were made. The Kisan Sabhas were discouraged and peasants asked to join the Congress. Batches of volunteers were drained off from the villages to the city for salt Satyagraha, cloth and liquor picketing and so on. The blows of police repression fell on an unprepared front.

A serious attempt was made only in two villages in Agra to organise a no rent campaign towards the end of December. The police repression started almost immediately. Attempts were made to follow the Bardoli model. Tenants migrated out of the villages. The police occupied the deserted villages and broke open the houses of tenants. The no-rent episode in the few villages of Agra collapsed in the first week of January 1931. This was the only instance of an organised no rent campaign in U P and it took place towards the end of the movement. There were sporadic attempts at a no-rent campaign in a few districts of U P towards the end of January.

'The Leader' reported on 25.1/31 that in thirteen villages of Rai Bareilly there was a general refusal to pay arrears of rent due to the landlords' tyranny and high-handedness. This was met by the Government by realising the rent as revenue under S. 12A of the Oudh Rent Act.

The declaration to start no-tax and no-rent campaign in U P and in the zamindari areas on the part of the Congress was more a threat than a plan of serious action. The brief sketch of the postponement, the lack of organised effort and half-hearted attempts at starting the campaigns in very restricted areas under the pressure of deep agrarian distress is sufficient proof of it. Mr Brailsford was correct when he wrote that the Congress like all nationalist movements includes all classes and some of its supporters would have been shocked by a no-rent campaign. (Bombay Chronicle 1/12/30) Mr Brailsford the disguised supporter of Imperialism knew the dangers of such a campaign. He said in normal conditions this rent is a merciless exaction. Today its payment is physically impossible when in fact a tenant cannot pay it requires no very violent agitation to induce him to refuse. He foreshadowed a grim prospect both for Imperialism and Nationalism. What was yesterday a nationalist agitation may become tomorrow an agrarian revolt.

Indications of sporadic agrarian revolt were not wanting in December. In village Karma in the Allahabad District the villagers rescued the volunteers arrested by the Police. Similarly anti Police riots were reported in January in the Allahabad District. On 19th January 1931 there was an attempt to burn the zamindars house in village Khanpur Allahabad District. On the 26th January 1930 a Tehsildar was killed in village Nonara Fatehpur District (U P) when he went accompanied by the zamindar to realise rents. This was an act of retaliation against the Tehsildar who beat and abused the tenants.

(3) The United Provinces was not the only province where agrarian revolts flared up towards the end of 1930. In the second period of the C D Movement anti-zamindar riots, anti money lender riots and risings of the peasants flared up everywhere in Bihar, in Bengal (Midnapur) in C P (Buldana) and so on. Even in Gujarat towards the end there were indications of a growing tendency towards violence on the part of patidars. Towards the end of December the Burma Rebellion which was an organised rising of the peasantry, whipped into action by continued agrarian distress began and continued for months together.



It was under the pressure of the rising tempo and frequency of agrarian revolts that the "truce" came about. The Congress capitulated wholesale. It got none of the points which it had put forward when the peace negotiations broke down in September 1930. The Government can be said to have "yielded", if at all, only on one point. It made, 'a peace gesture' to the Congress, thus recognising it for the time being as an important political force in the country. Imperialism was forced to do this under the stress of the intense agrarian crisis in India, and an ever deepening economic crisis in England itself. Imperialism wanted breathing time to consolidate its position in England itself, so as to be in a better position to tighten its grip on India. The Congress itself terrorised into submission by the growing menace of the agrarian revolution capitulated and granted Imperialism the breathing space it wanted. This it did to its own cost, as the recent events have shown. Since the so called Truce Imperialist repression has not abated, on the other hand it has been steadily increasing. They have begun a ruthless reign of terror in Bengal and are employing ultra-Czarist methods of torture against revolutionaries. The same is happening in the N.W.F. Provinces. Imperialism is talking the same language with the Congress which it did when the peace negotiations broke down. In reply to Mr. Gandhi's pleading telegram asking whether the Bengal Ordinance and the U.P. repression were indications of friendly relations between us, Lord Willingdon says, 'The Government desire to have friendly relations with *all* political parties and *all* sections of the public.' Imperialism can once again afford to ignore the Congress as 'the party which can deliver the goods'.

The Delhi 'Truce' brought the peasants nothing whatsoever. The peasantry figured in the Truce terms no doubt, and this was principally with reference to Bardoli, which after all was the biggest organised peasant struggle under the leadership of the Congress. This agreement laid down the return of moveable and immoveable property attached during the campaign by the Government, only under certain conditions. As for remission in land revenue it said that 'If necessary the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.' "No

compensation was to be given for immoveable property sold or otherwise disposed of" This is all that the peasantry gained

In order to make the bitter pill of capitulation at Delhi acceptable to the rank and file and to the peasantry, the Congress declared that its goal of 'Purna Swaraj' remained intact In its "left" propaganda it stated that if Swaraj was not won at the R T C it would start the struggle again Further it passed a resolution of the declaration of fundamental rights The economic demands of the peasants were for the first time officially laid down by the Congress These demands do not go much beyond the 'eleven points' already referred to in the previous section The principal demands are

(1) Reduction of land revenue and rent, with compensation to the small zamindars for the reduction of the latter

(2) Graduated tax on agricultural income

(3) Exemption from rent for uneconomic holdings with corresponding compensation to the small zamindars affected by such an exemption

(4) Abolition of serfdom

(5) Control of usury

According to these demands landlordism is to remain intact As for the petty reforms suggested we may point out that the various Imperialist Commissions themselves have suggested similar reforms The 'abolition of serfdom' can have no meaning until the very basis of the present feudal-Imperialist agrarian economy is knocked out The law in India as we have said does not recognise serfdom Serfdom exists in India in spite of it and will continue to exist as long as the zamindars and the talukdars and their agents continue to have unfettered power over the life and limb of their tenants as long as the money-lenders ride on the back of the poor peasants and suck them dry and as long as rack-renting and uneconomic units of land continue The Congress will not touch the power and the privileges of the zamindars and the money lenders

Immediately the thinly disguised window dressing at Karachi was over, the Congress began to retreat The history of the amendments to the Karachi resolution is interesting in this respect

The Congress appointed a Committee to invite amendments to the resolution of fundamental rights which were to be brought before the A I C C before the resolution could be adopted in its final form. This was done in August 1931. The clause about the reduction of revenue and rent was more clearly worded to reassure the zamindars that the system of land tenure was to remain intact. "It was only to be reformed". Further the Sub-Committee's amendment as to the prohibition of usury was turned down. The formula of 'control of usury' was adhered to.

After the Truce the Congress took over the task of Government's tax collector. In spite of the heavy depression and in spite of the losses the peasantry had suffered under police repression during the C D Movement the Congress propagandists began to exhort the peasants everywhere to pay up. Imperialism had granted some remissions which were totally inadequate. Soon after the truce police repression began again, especially in the zamindari provinces for extorting rent and revenue. Agitation and organisation for securing total or partial remissions was the crying need of the movement. There was excellent opportunity for unfolding peasant organisation and peasant unions on the basis of these partial demands. Agriculturists' conferences took place in all provinces in Bombay, Bengal, C P, Madras. During the last year and resolutions demanding remissions were passed but actual organisational work was rarely done nor was partial economic struggle started anywhere. In U P however the conditions were too bad. Continued agrarian distress, inadequate remissions by the Government, a regime of torture and arrests at the hands of the police and the agents of the zamindars created an uncomfortable situation for the U P Congress after the Truce. On the one hand the Congress had to espouse the cause of the peasants and play the role of their champion and on the other hand it had to fulfil its duty as the tax-collector of Imperialism and the rent collector of the zamindar. It formulated the economic demands of the tenants in the form of a demand for remission of rent, but went on progressively retreating and lowering the demand to suit the zamindars and Imperialism. On the 13th of March 1931, the Council of the U P P C C passed a resolution in which it "noted with grave

concern that coercive and offensive measures are being taken to recover rent and revenue in these provinces in spite of the admitted fact that there is acute economic distress and consequent inability to pay the demand" "The only possible solution of the present problem," the resolution went on to suggest, "was the remission of a large part of the rent which the Council suggest should be 60 per cent in the case of non-occupancy tenants and 50 per cent in the case of occupancy tenants and corresponding remission by the local Government of the revenue' On the 23rd of March 1931 Mahatma Gandhi issued a manifesto to the kisans of the U P which was submitted to U P Governor before hand In this manifesto Mr Gandhi says "The Congress expects every tenant to pay as early as possible all the rent he can in no case as a general rule less than 8 annas or 12 annas as the case may be Here the demand of 50 to 60 per cent remission has been lowered to 50 to 25 per cent On the 14th of June, the U P P C C passed a resolution asking the statutory and sub-tenants to pay 8 annas in the rupee and the occupancy tenants to pay 12 annas in the rupee of the rent demand The resolution add "those who are in a position to pay more should do so ' (U P P C C Report on "Agrarian Distress in U P September 1931)

In spite of the resolutions of the Congress, the peasant could not pay for most simple reason that he had no surplus at all to pay his rent with The Report of the U P P C C referred to above shows calculations of the budget of an average holding in U P at the present prices It states that "According to these calculations no surplus is available for the payment of rent The condition of the large majority of cultivators is one of an object destitution However we may work the figures, the conclusion is irresistible that at the present rate the value of the produce of an average holding will not be enough to leave any surplus with the tenant for the payment of rent (ibid page 36) Naturally the Congress drive in the villages for payment failed The U P Government refused to grant any further adequate remissions, and repression, arrest, and torture in the villages went on increasing As the collection time approached (November), the demand for no-rent campaign on behalf of the peasantry became pressing In spite of the fact that negotiations were going on with the Government, the U P P C C was forced to authorise the

Allahabad D C C to inaugurate a no-rent campaign (15th November, 1931) In December it was authorised in Cawnpore, Etawah, Rai Bareilly, and Unao

Once again there are no preparations, and the leadership is vacillating Mr Sherwani, President, U P P C C declared the other day "this is not a no-rent campaign, tenants have merely suspended a portion of their payment" He added that the struggle could be suspended if the Government were prepared to continue the negotiations From recent reports it appears that the U P Congress leaders are divided as to the advisability of launching the present no-rent campaign Thus while the Congress was retreating Imperialism has once again taken the offensive The Congress has been forced to start the C D Movement once again this time under a disadvantage as the Imperialist attack has already begun Once again the Working Committee has called upon the people to break salt laws, to civil breach of non-moral laws (?) breach of ordinances etc No tax and no-rent is not yet specifically recommended for immediate action Social boycott of Government officials which proved so effective in the last movement, is this time not to be used as it is said to be against the principle of Satyagraha The Working Committee has given 'a special assurance to the zamindars that there was no design on their interests legitimately acquired and appealing to the landed and monied classes to help the Congress' (Leader 4th January, 1932) Further from the utterance of a responsible Congress Journal of Bombay it is quite clear that 'in the present C D Movement, no constitutional issue is involved as in the last The struggle, they (Congress leaders) admit is of a 'defensive' character, *limited* to an assertion of the right to ventilate the people's grievances and secure suitable relief in respect to Bengal, Frontier and U P Ordinances, and that if only the Government did not become obsessed with the idea of a Congress movement to subvert law and order and make an onslaught on civil liberties through their ordinances, there would really be no crisis at all' (Free Press Journal, 9/1/32)

With reference to U P the only place where a no tax campaign is on the Congress "formula" according to this journal is that 'the Government should suspend collections, and the Congress should

suspend the no-tax campaign, and both parties should agree to abide by the recommendations of a "competent" Committee, which would investigate the question of prices, economic situation, etc., and formulate the principles on which rent should be levied and collections, suspensions and remissions should be made." This demand even a liberal zamindar like Hon'ble Nawab of Chhatari considers to be reasonable and just. From this it is quite clear that the scope of the C.D. Movement is already limited, and in spite of the declarations saying that it is the "final struggle" one may confidently predict its early collapse.

The experience of the last C.D. Movement as well as this prelude of the new campaign, brings us to the irresistible conclusion that the Congress being an organisation which is dependent on the support of "landed and monied classes" cannot and will not lead the peasantry to its political and economic emancipation. This work can only be achieved through an agrarian revolution, and only the agrarian revolution against British Capitalism and Indian landlordism can be the basis for the revolutionary emancipation of India.

### **Agrarian Revolution—the only Solution**

We have seen that Imperialism in spite of its past administrative reforms as well as its proposed technical improvements will not be able to solve the agrarian problem. The administrative reforms have not been anything more than weak palliatives, which did not, and cannot, go to the root of the question—the rights and powers of intermediate parasitic classes. Imperialism is no doubt interested in granting stability to the actual cultivators, in order to secure a stable agrarian production. But it must at the same time not displace the zamindars, money-lenders and intermediaries, whose support it must enlist as bulwarks of reaction and counter-revolution. Thus these administrative changes cannot touch the property rights of the zamindars and intermediaries. It cannot touch the capitalist relations obtaining in the countryside. If occupancy rights are granted to a section of the raiyats—these again tend to become non-cultivating sub-landlords, and a class of under-raiyats with the same difficulties of insecurity grows up under them. This has been the case in Bengal. If a Land Alienation Act prevents the transfer of

land to a money-lender "outside the agricultural tribe", the money-lender reproduces himself inside the tribe itself. Even if the great effort of technical improvement were to fructify it would only benefit a thin stratum of rich peasants having large holdings. The misery and poverty of the poor peasantry who form the overwhelming bulk of the entire population of India remains untouched. Any scheme of agricultural development which keeps the existing social order with its peculiar intermixture of feudal-capitalist relations must, as we have pointed out, necessarily lead to the aggravation of the problem, through mass evictions and mass increase in the number of landless labourers.

Bourgeois nationalism certainly likes to play the rôle of the champion of the poor peasantry against Imperialism. It certainly wishes to use its influence on the peasant masses as a weapon to extort further concessions from Imperialism. But its community of interests with the rural exploiting classes prevents it from putting forth or even supporting the immediate class demands of the poor peasantry. At best they have made the common grievances of the zamindars and peasants against the Government the planks of their agitation and carefully avoided all issues involving a class conflict between the peasants and the zamindar and middlemen. The review of the C. D. Movement which we have given is a sufficient proof of this statement. We have seen how studiously a no-rent campaign was avoided and postponed as far as possible in the U. P. Evading and sabotaging the class war in the countryside is the declared aim of the Congress leaders.

### **The Peasant Programme of the Workers' and Peasants' Party**

The Workers' and Peasants' Parties have from the very outset clearly and lucidly formulated all the immediate and pressing demands of the peasantry against both Imperialism and the zamindars. In their detail these demands differed for different provinces but in principle they demanded (1) abolition of intermediate tenures, (2) reduction of rent and fixing a maximum scale of rental, (3) abolition of all 'nazfana' 'bhent', etc. (4) illegal cesses ('abwabs') to be cognisable offences, (5) fixed rate of interest, (6) stopping the transfer of land to non-agriculturists, and

(7) abolition of "batai", "batga" systems, etc. The immediate partial demands of the peasants themselves were taken up by the Workers' and Peasants Parties as the planks of their platform and their propaganda. As these demands stand they contain an unbridgeable class conflict between the poor peasants and the rural exploiters. This class conflict need not be imported from outside. What is needed is the recognition of it. These partial demands form the basis for agitation and organisation of the peasantry for the redress of their immediate economic grievances. As the struggle proceeds on this basis, as the organisation of the peasants grows, the peasants themselves will come to the point of making the revolutionary demand for sole rights over the land they cultivate and hence an elimination of the landlord class. [Political Resolution (2)]

### **A Programme of Agrarian Revolution**

This revolutionary demand—land to the peasant, abolition of the entire parasitic landlord class—is the kernel of a programme of agrarian revolution. Before we deal with the other implications of the agrarian revolution, before we deal with the classes that will carry it out, and with its future perspectives, we shall first answer the question how the overthrow of the parasitic landlordism is the essential and inevitable pre-condition of any real development of agriculture—of any substantial bettering of the economic condition of the broad masses of the peasantry.

The cancellation of all zamindari rights in land as well as of all unproductive intermediary tenures, will remove the greatest obstacle in the way of satisfying the land-hunger of the millions of poor peasants. A rational redistribution of holdings will then be possible. This redistribution could then be carried out by the village council representing the poor peasants of the village. Every peasant will have an inalienable right in the holding he cultivates with his own and his family's labour. Every redistribution, transfer or exchange will be carried out not through the medium of sale but through the agency of the village council elected by the cultivators themselves. Thus land ceases to be a commodity. Land speculation ceases.



Money-lenders and middlemen can no longer appropriate the land of the peasants. The land becomes the common property of the people—the land is nationalised. These changes will create the first essential pre-conditions for a stable agriculture—security of the cultivator on his land. Further those lands which are today "closed" by the zamindar and rendered not available for cultivation will be expropriated and divided among the landless peasantry.

This is the guiding thought in the clear and concrete formulation of the programme of Agrarian Revolution which was made by the C.P.I. recently in its "Draft Platform of Action". The peasant demands formulated by the C.P.I. are as follows:

(1) The confiscation without compensation of all land and estates, forests and pastures of the native princes, landlords, money-lenders and the British Government and its transference to peasant committees for use by the toiling masses of the peasantry. The complete wiping out of the mediaeval system of landholding.

(2) The immediate confiscation of all plantations and their transference to revolutionary committees elected by the plantation workers. The formulation of the demand in the case of plantations is two-fold. With reference to plantations which are parcelled out in small allotments, worked by contract workers with more or less primitive methods, the demand is that these allotments and the land belonging to the plantation and not in cultivation, should be handed over to the labourers and poor peasants as their property. In the case of large scale mechanically equipped plantations and workshops connected therewith, the demand put forward is the nationalisation of the plantation in the interests of the whole Indian people.

(3) The immediate nationalisation of the whole system of irrigation, complete cancellation of indebtedness and taxes, and the transference of the control and supervision of the work of irrigation to revolutionary peasant committees, elected by the working peasantry.

### **The Immediate Gains of the Agrarian Revolution**

The agrarian revolution will abolish as if by a single stroke the immense tribute which the peasantry has today to pay to the zamindar and the middlemen 48.5% of the total arable land in British India is owned by the big zamindars Mr K T Shah, the economist of bourgeois nationalism, estimates the "tribute appropriated by the big zamindars at 25% of the total agricultural produce of these areas This comes to about Rs 175 crores annually We must add to this the tribute taken from the peasantry by the non-agriculturist landowners of the ryotwari areas In the ryotwari areas 50% of the land is owned by sub-landlords who do not cultivate it but extract rents from those who actually till it This total rental may be roughly taken as half the total land revenue from the ryotwari areas, which is Rs 20 crores Thus Rs 184 crores is appropriated annually by the zamindars and middlemen This tribute does not return to the land in the form of improvements, manure &c directly, nor does it do so indirectly as the whole of this income is as yet untaxed An agrarian revolution alone will abolish this heavy tribute This will put a stop to the "robber" economy perpetrated against the soil today It will leave a greater margin to the peasant, as it will increase his income per capita by 25% It will tend to stabilise agricultural production immediately on the present basis

### **Agrarian Revolution, the Axis of the National Revolution**

The tasks of the agrarian revolution will have to be carried out against the zamindars and middlemen, who are the direct oppressors of the peasants, against the national bourgeoisie which has, as we have seen, affiliations with the rural exploiting classes, and against Imperialism, which is the biggest oppressor and as such is interested in keeping up its smaller allies, the zamindars and the bourgeoisie Hence if agrarian revolution is to be successful it must be accompanied by a national revolutionary struggle against the existing imperialist-feudal state

The national revolution is often described in our literature as a bourgeois-democratic revolution The reason for this is that the democratic tasks which the bourgeois revolutions of Europe

performed in the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries have still to be achieved in India. These tasks are: (1) abolition of landlordism; (2) elimination of all pre-capitalist forms of exploitation (serfdom, feudal cesses and services etc.); (3) end of the autocratic rule of the princes; and (4) substitution for the imperialist-feudal state of a republic based on adult suffrage. Thus we see that agrarian revolution must form part of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. The consummation of these tasks in a country is in itself not inconsistent with the subsequent development of that country on capitalist lines. In fact that is exactly what happened in Europe after the bourgeois revolutions. The overthrow of the autocratic rule of the feudal princes and landlords opened up the field for capitalist development and modern industry. The peasant was freed from his feudal fetters and subjected to capitalist exploitation. Agriculture emerged out of its backward stage and entered the phase of modern large scale farming under the domination of capital. This was possible in the period of the dawn of Capitalism, when the bourgeoisie was a progressive and revolutionary force. Today, in the period of Imperialism that is of the decline of Capitalism, the bourgeoisie has allied itself with remnants of feudalism, and is thus incapable of carrying through the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This is true of the imperialist as well as of the colonial bourgeoisie. The Indian bourgeoisie is, as we have seen, bound by ties of common interest partly with Imperialism and partly with the landed aristocracy. It cannot carry out these tasks without endangering its own interests.

The national revolutionary struggle is undoubtedly a struggle of the Indian people against foreign domination. But it is at the same time a class struggle. Those classes of Indian society which are the most determined and courageous fighters against British Imperialism cannot deliver the decisive blow at their bitterest enemy without simultaneously hitting at their native oppressors and exploiters. The Indian bourgeoisie has its differences with Imperialism and is today playing an oppositional role and parading as the champion of the Indian people against Imperialism. But no sooner will the national revolutionary

struggle enter on its decisive phase, than the Indian bourgeoisie will come out as an openly and aggressively counter-revolutionary force, and ally itself with the princes, the zamindars, and Imperialism, against the revolutionary workers and peasants. Thus the national revolutionary struggle cannot be carried to its logical conclusion without assuming an acute form of class struggle—of workers against capitalists, of peasants against zamindars, of all the exploited against all the exploiters. The broad masses of the peasants cannot be brought into the struggle against Imperialism except on the programme and platform of their class-demands. And how can the national-revolutionary movement of a predominantly agricultural country like India be powerful enough to defeat Imperialism, unless it draws in the millions of its peasant masses? The class-demands on the basis of which our Party approaches the peasants are not picked from books—nor is it necessary to tutor them to the peasants. In fact these demands have been put up by the peasants themselves, in their own way. They have led to isolated and spontaneous classes in the past. A systematic organisation and agitation of the peasantry on the basis of these demands will mean the unfolding of class struggle in the rural areas. This class struggle is not of our making; just as the struggle between labour and capital is not of our making. It exists independently of us—is the very basis of the society in which we live. What we wish to emphasise is this, that until this class struggle assumes a conscious form, becomes nation-wide, until it rises to the pitch of an agrarian revolution, and until it is linked up with the political struggle for national liberation led by the proletariat, until then the success of the national-democratic revolution will not be guaranteed. It is in this sense that we say that the agrarian revolution has been and remains the axis of the national revolution.

### **The Allies of the Peasantry in the Agrarian Revolution**

The agrarian revolution is often misunderstood as a revolution of the peasantry as a class, fighting single-handed against its oppressors. The history of the peasant movements of the world teaches us that this has never been so. The agrarian revolutions of

the past have been carried out under the leadership either of the bourgeoisie or of the proletariat. There were no doubt peasant struggles in the pre-capitalist period, before either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat was born. One such example which was carefully studied by F. Engels was the peasant war in Germany in the XIIIth century. The modern proletariat was not born. The bourgeoisie was weak and young. The peasants carried out single-handed a most heroic struggle against their oppressors but were ultimately defeated and had to bow down under heavier chains of serfdom.

### **The Agrarian Revolution in the Dawn of Capitalism**

In the epoch of the bourgeois revolutions, i.e. in the dawn of Capitalism, the agrarian revolutions were fought and won under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. These agrarian revolutions led to the abolition of serfdom, of feudal dues, cesses and services, and in some places, e.g. in France, led to the complete abolition of feudal ownership in land. Feudal exploitation of the peasants made way for capitalist exploitation. The setting free of serfs supplied cheap labour to the new industries. The growth of industries made the application of modern methods in agriculture possible. With these modern methods large scale farming became possible, now that the fetters of feudal ownership were either destroyed or modified so as to suit the needs of capitalist economy. The large capitalist farmer expropriated the small peasant and exploited the land labourers. The exploitation of the peasant was reproduced, but on a higher plane, in the plane of capitalist society. Such was the course of the agrarian revolutions of the bourgeoisie, which led to the introduction of capitalist agriculture. The relation of serf versus master was abolished, but was replaced by the relation of labourer versus capitalist farmer.

In the epoch of Imperialism, the development of Capitalism in backward countries follows an essentially different course. The development of Capitalism in such countries proceeds more or less under the aegis of the finance capital of a more advanced capitalist country. The development proceeds under the retention of most of the remnants of feudalism. The indigenous bourgeoisie

which grows up is less independent, more parasitic, and has affiliations with the landed aristocracy. It is for this reason that the belated agrarian revolution in such countries cannot be carried out by the bourgeoisie. A classical example of this type is the agrarian revolution in Russia. Lenin has told us that this revolution was not carried out by the bourgeoisie. "Even the March revolution, the revolution of the bourgeoisie and the 'party of compromise' promised the peasants this victory over the landowners. But it did not keep its promise. Only the November Revolution, only the victory of the working-class in the towns, only the authority of the Soviets, made it possible to free the whole of Russia from end to end from the mischievous heritage of our former serfdom—from the economic exploitation of the peasantry by the landowning bourgeoisie, whose yoke pressed impartially on all peasants without distinction" (P 1149 "The Land Revolution in Russia" page 5). What was true of the agrarian revolution in Russia will be far more true of the agrarian revolution in India. We have seen that the Indian bourgeoisie will be incapable of carrying through the bourgeois democratic revolution. The Indian peasantry will have to look to different quarters for an ally in the agrarian revolution.

### **The Proletariat the Natural Ally of the Peasantry in India**

During the last decade a new class, which is the characteristic product of the capitalist development of modern India has come forward in the political arena. The industrial working class, or the proletariat, is objectively the bitterest and most determined opponent of Imperialism. The proletariat is the only class which will carry through the national revolution to its conclusion and accomplish its bourgeoisie-democratic tasks. The proletariat in India occupies a vital position in the imperialist apparatus of domination. It works in its factories and war-industries; it runs its network of transport and traffic, the railways, docks, etc. In comparison with other sections of toilers it is far more advanced, more disciplined, more concentrated, and far more organised. The rapid growth of political consciousness and organisation among the working-class is a potential menace to Imperialism. (The present trial is but one of the many futile efforts of Imperialism to

avert this menace). For these reasons the proletariat is the potential leader of the national revolution in India, and as such the principal ally of the peasantry in its struggle against the Government and the landlords. In fact the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry is the fundamental pre-requisite of the success of the agrarian revolution in India.

The imperialist state in India, as a police-state, oppresses the workers and the peasants alike. When the starving worker strikes against the capitalist master, it is the imperialist baton which intervenes on behalf of the capitalist in the name of "law and order." When the tax-burdened peasant grows restive under the load of enhanced assessment, it is the "Kitchener Squadron" which is sent to "reason" with him. The imperialist state, as an exploiter states, exploits the peasants as a rack-renting landlord in the ryotwari areas. It exploits the workers as the capitalist financier of the railways, the port-trusts etc. The peasantry has, no doubt, other exploiters to fight against the zamindars, the sub-landlords and the money-lenders. Even in this struggle the bourgeois nationalists have failed to support them, as we have shown. It is the proletariat which alone can support the peasants in all their struggles against all their exploiters.

The hard school of strike struggle in which the proletariat is ceaselessly engaged, awakens it to the consciousness that it cannot emancipate itself from capitalist exploitation unless it deals a death blow to Imperialism in India. This task of overthrowing Imperialism cannot be achieved by the proletariat single-handed. It must link up its struggle with that of the broad masses of the peasantry. It must organise itself into a political party with a programme of an all-round popular revolution. It must mobilise under its red banner all the oppressed and exploited classes and marshal them against Imperialism.

The fighting alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry has a further basis in India. The Indian proletariat is to a considerable extent a floating population. A substantial section of it oscillates between the city and the countryside. Many poor peasants wander into the city in search of a short-time employment to earn a little cash, and then return to their villages. This

floating section of the working-class forms the living link between the stable, permanently settled proletariat of the cities, and the poor peasants and land labourers of the countryside. The stable proletariat too is the poor peasant of yesterday, and he knows the plight and misery of the poor peasantry full well. Thus the proletariat alone is the truest and best ally of the peasantry in its fight against its oppressors.

### **The Organisation and Tactics of the Agrarian Revolution**

We have seen that the operation of Imperialism aggravates the agrarian crisis in India by worsening the conditions of the poor peasantry and by swelling the ranks of the landless proletariat. The national bourgeoisie was the first to appear in the Indian political arena "to demonstrate their opposition to the ruling imperialist-feudal bloc." Their opposition however is "not of a revolutionary but a reformist and class-collaborationist character," and hence it cannot and does not result in the formation of the class organisations of the peasantry. "The demonstrations of the bourgeois opposition against the imperialist-feudal bloc, however, even if they do not have any deep foundation, can exert a certain *accelerating* influence on the process of the political awakening of the wide masses of toilers"—especially the peasantry. This initial ferment could, in spite of the wishes of the bourgeoisie, be made the basis for the class organisation of the peasantry, which is the first step towards the agrarian revolution.

The peasant organisations, such as came into existence under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, were always dominated by the rural exploiters. The organisations which came into existence in the ryotwari areas under the aegis of the "Land League", were dominated by the rich sub-landlord. So are the Zamindar Leagues of the Punjab under the thumb of the landlords and money-lenders. The Kisan Sabhas which grew up in the U.P. in the days of the Non-Co-operation campaign collapsed after the Oudh insurrection, and were not revived afterwards. The only organisational form which the bourgeoisie has pressed forward is the "village panchayat" based on the caste-system. The village panchayats with their semi-religious atmosphere are admirable



instruments to secure the domination of the village bosses over the cultivators and blur the class conflict in the villages. The peasant organisations of the bourgeoisie as they stand today are hopelessly inadequate and unsuited to the task of unfolding the agrarian revolution.

Recently attempts are being made to revive "Kisan Sabhas" in U.P. The aims and objects put forward by the central organisation of the Kisan Sabhas (Central Kisan Sangh) include the following demands:

(1) Reduction of revenue and rent so as to leave sufficient margin of existence to the peasants; (2) Permanent right on the land he cultivates; (3) Abolition of 'Nazrana', 'Hari' and 'Begari' (i.e., illegal cases and forced labour); (4) Reduction of canal dues; (5) Reduction in the rate of interest; (6) Right to build houses, dig wells etc., on the land he cultivates; (7) Formation of Panchayats; (8) Promoting subsidiary industries in the village; and (9) Free and compulsory education.

These are such demands as will be readily agreed to by 'good' zamindars in principle. They do not involve the abolition of landlordism or the prohibition of usury. The Kisan Sangh is supposed to be an independent organisation of peasants; or, in the language of its aims and objects, "all the persons whose main source of income is agriculture." And 'it strives for their economic and political progress.' Thus in the rules of the Central Kisan Sangh, there is nothing to debar the zamindars from becoming its members. In practice the Kisan Sabhas are merely the auxiliary organisations of the Congress. They are not allowed to function as the permanent organisation of the peasant class, which seek to continue and develop economic struggle in correlation with the political. Kisan Sabhas are organised and disbanded to suit the political needs of the Congress bosses. During the C.D. Movement when it was a question of controlling and sabotaging the no-rent campaign in U.P., the Kisan Sabhas were disbanded. It was the Congress Committees, dominated by the 'good' zamindars and their agents, which functioned. After the truce, the Kisan Sabhas were again started. The attitude which the Congress leaders adopt towards the Kisan Sabhas is clear from

the following remarks in the U.P.P.C.C. Report on "Agrarian Distress in U.P." On page 87, the Report says: "It seems to us that it is absolutely necessary that clear and definite instructions should be given to the Congress workers in the villages as to the attitude which the tenants should be asked to adopt towards the zamindars in the matter of payment of rents and other cognate matters. *Kisan Sabhas have been organised but without definite programme, and unless properly led, might do more harm than good.*" (Refers to Barabanki). Obviously the Congress is afraid that Kisan Sabhas unless 'properly led' may put forward the class demands of the peasantry against the zamindars, and if allowed to develop, they may challenge the authority of the Congress Committees in the countryside. Similarly in the other parts of India, (C.P. Deccan, Madras) the Congress leaders never make any attempt to form permanently functioning Peasant Leagues or Unions. Annual Peasant Conferences are convened under the presidentship of lawyers, 'good' money-lenders, and zamindars, who invariably read a sermon on class-collaboration. The bourgeoisie in India have never organised peasant organisations, as organs to lead the political and economic struggle of the peasant itself. All they have done is to create organisations to act as a check on the development of any such struggle.

The party of the proletariat cannot discharge its task as the ally of the peasantry merely by issuing paper programmes of agrarian revolution. The proletariat must come forward and show the peasantry the way to form their own class organisations, to fight for their immediate economic demands, organisations somewhat similar to those which the proletariat has built for itself in the cities viz. Trade Unions. The Peasant Unions will include only peasants who cultivate the land with the labour of their own family, as well as, in the initial stages, the land labourers. The peasant unions must on no account contain the village exploiters, the rich peasants, landlords, money-lenders or traders. It is only when this condition is fulfilled that the peasant unions will be a suitable basic organisation for the peasant struggle for partial demands. The preliminary unit of organisation will naturally be the village. But in the event of a struggle for partial demands, such

as opposition to an enhancement of tax or rent, or against illegal cesses, official oppression, etc., the union will undoubtedly grow and embrace a number of surrounding villages, or even a taluka. During such a partial struggle the peasants will learn to form an elected executive body of the union, which will make a centralised and proper conduct of the struggle possible. The formation and functioning of such a body, the peasant committee, makes the next step in the organisational training of the peasantry. The peasant thus learns to get his business done through a properly elected representative body of his own class. The peasant will learn the art of self-Government through this peasant committee. In fact the peasant committee, as a class organisation, is the nuclear unit of self-Government on which the future republic of the workers and peasants of India will be based.

The peasant committee bears the same relation to the peasant union as the strike committee does to the trade union. The proletarian cadres coming over to the peasantry from the cities will materially assist the peasantry in the formation and functioning of such peasant committees. It is only when such peasant committees, consisting of class-conscious cadres of peasants spring up everywhere, it is only when such cadres are steeled in the struggle for partial demands, that it will be possible to unfold and lead a country-wide no-rent and no-tax campaign. A no-rent and no-tax campaign, thus organised on a definite class basis, can no more be stopped or betrayed by the machinations of the national bourgeoisie.

Such a no-tax and no-rent campaign however, will not raise itself to the level of an agrarian revolution, unless it is simultaneously backed by a country-wide general strike of all workers of India. In the event of such a simultaneous action, the alliance of the peasantry and the proletariat will take a concrete form, and the death knell of Imperialism will have sounded. The peasant committees and strike committees will function in close co-operation on the basis of a broad national-revolutionary programme. These committees will act then as organs of struggle for the national revolution. As the struggle develops the peasant committees will proceed to the first act of the agrarian revolution,

the seizure of the lands of the big zamindars. The lands thus seized will be distributed among the poor peasants, under the democratic authority of the peasant committees. This first act of agrarian revolution cannot have stability unless there is a simultaneous capture of power by the workers' and peasants' committees in conjunction with the soldiers' committees. The organs of struggle will thus grow over into the organs of power, the Workers' Peasants' and Soldiers' Soviets, which will be the basic units of the Workers' and Peasants' Republic of India. The further progress and success of the agrarian revolution can only be guaranteed by such a National Government.

Here we may once again mention that the C P I has recently chalked out a programme of action for the peasantry—in its Draft Platform, with which we are in full agreement. The C P I calls upon the peasantry and agricultural proletariat to engage in all kinds of political demonstrations and collective refusal to pay taxes and dues or to carry out the orders and decisions of the Government and its agents. Further points in this programme of action are as follows:

(1) Refusal to pay rent, irrigation charges, or other exactions and refusal to carry out any labour services whatsoever (Begar) for the landlords, native princes, and their agents.

(2) Refusal to pay debts and arrears to Government, the landlords and the money-lenders in any form whatsoever. As a practical watchword for the campaign among the peasantry and as a means of developing more political consciousness in the present movement, the C P I proposes the immediate organisation of revolutionary peasants' committees in order to carry on a fight to achieve all the revolutionary democratic changes required in the interests of emancipating the peasantry from the yoke of British Imperialism and its feudal allies. The C P I lays stress on the facts that the agricultural proletariat and especially the plantation workers should be independently organised, and their organisations be amalgamated with the proletariat of the towns under the banner of the Communist Party and represented on the peasant committees. The C P I rightly points out that the permanent achievement of these political and social changes is only possible

by the overthrow of British domination and the creation of a Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.

We have but cursorily sketched the character and trend of the organisation and growth of the peasantry, leading up to the agrarian revolution. We need not go into detail to outline the various organisational forms. In fact the little organisational work we did among the peasantry ourselves, in the period up to our arrest, was restricted to Mymensingh in Bengal and a few places in the Punjab. But it is necessary for us to point out that our organisational programme for the peasantry was open and above-board, and closely resembled the well-recognised organisations of the workers, such as strike committees and trade unions. The class conflict on which alone such organisations can be based is not of our making. It exists in spite of us, thanks to the capitalist-feudal character of our society. What the party, the conscious vanguard of the working-class, does, is to recognise this class conflict and to harness its maximum motive power through such class organisations in order to crush the parasitic exploiters of society, and free the path for unhampered social and technical progress and for and equitable distribution of the products of labour.

### **The Socialist Reorganisation of Agriculture**

The victory of the agrarian revolution will open up new perspectives before the national Government of India, which, as we have already seen, will necessarily be a democratic republic of workers and peasants. The agrarian revolution will have deposed the imperialist super-landlord, expropriated the feudal zamindars and rajahs, and will have effected a more or less equitable distribution of land among the poor peasantry. These changes will not have touched the technical basis of agriculture. Agricultural production will have still to be carried on, on an individual basis and with the help of the same backward and primitive means. The needs of the market will still be supplied by individual producers. The competition between the individual producers will exist as before. The rich peasants will thrive at the cost of the poor, and with the progressive industrial policy of the national Government, the rich farmer will develop into a capitalist farmer, using machinery and manure. Capitalist exploitation of the poor

peasants and land workers by the rich farmers will go on in full swing. The National Government will have to depend more and more on the rich peasant, or kulak. The National Government which was established by the workers and peasants in the teeth of the opposition of the bourgeoisie, may thus slide into their hands, and be transformed into a counter-revolutionary bourgeois Government. There is therefore, abstractly speaking, a possibility of the agrarian revolution in India being succeeded by a capitalist development of agriculture, leading to a re-establishment of Capitalism and capitalist exploitation. The reason for this possibility is simply this that the agrarian revolution in the main destroys feudal ownership, but it cannot and does not abolish private ownership as such, or individual production, which are the basis of Capitalism.

### **The Path of Socialist Development**

In the epoch of Imperialism however, another path of development is possible, the path of the socialist development of agriculture. The agrarian revolutions in the epoch of Imperialism take place under the leadership of the proletariat. It is the proletariat which simultaneously carries out the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and establishes the rule of a workers' and peasants' Government. The first steps of such a Government will be the expropriation and nationalisation of key industries, means of transport and banks. The proletariat, which is the motive power behind the Government, can use these commanding heights of national economy to direct the development of agriculture on socialist lines. It will take over existing large consolidated estates and convert them into model large scale agricultural farms run on the lines of socialist industry. It will unfold a mass cooperative movement among the peasantry and encourage cooperative production and collective farming. It will quicken the pace of development of heavy industry, necessary for the production of agricultural machinery, tractors and manures. This will on the one hand strengthen the position of the proletariat and make a rapid progress of large scale agriculture possible. By and by the individual producers will be

drawn into the network of the cooperative production, and later on organised into collective large-scale farms. The "kulak" farms will no longer be in a position to compete with gigantic collective farms run by modern machinery. The very basis for individual farming will disappear. Agriculture becomes a part of the socialist industry of the proletarian state.

Such in short is the perspective of a socialist reorganisation of agriculture which the proletariat can achieve after the victory of the agrarian revolution.

### **The Russian Example**

Socialist organisation of agriculture is today no longer a mere utopia, but a reality which is being built up in Soviet Russia. Villifiers and enemies of the Soviet Union will have us believe that Capitalism was re-established in Russia in the name of the New Economic Policy, and that it is Capitalism which is thriving at present in Russia. The late counsel for the Prosecution made some amazing statements in his opening address before this Court, in connection with this subject. One seeks in vain for arguments in the vulgar vapourings of Mr. James. There are none. He was not so much interested in arguments as in abuse. However we are not concerned with that. We only wish to state a few facts to show the growth and the character of the socialist reorganisation of agriculture in Russia which succeeded the agrarian revolution of 1917.

### **Russian Agricultural Conditions before the Revolution**

The pre-revolutionary Russian village groaned under the pressure of the remnants of feudalism. The best land was in the hands of the big landowners; and only a very small portion of these lands was cultivated by modern methods by capitalist farmers. The rest of this land was parcelled out among occupancy tenants, many of whom in addition to paying their rent had to work on the land of their landlord to pay off the price of these occupancy rights. The same system was prevalent on capitalist farms. Almost the entire agricultural production of pre-revolutionary Russia came from the overwhelming majority of

small peasants working on uneconomic holdings. The agrarian reforms of Stolypin, which enabled the peasant to go out of the village-community and sell his land, accelerated the concentration of land in the hands of the capitalist farmers, and thus helped capitalist farming. But all the various forms of pre-capitalist exploitation, serfdom, feudal services, debt-slavery etc. remained. The indigenous industry did not produce agricultural machines, or manure. Agricultural technique was very backward.

The agrarian revolution in Russia had the task of creating the preconditions for the unhampered development of agricultural production. It solved this task by nationalising the land by destroying big landownership, and by cutting the Gordian knot of the complicated land-relations obtaining before the revolution.

What were the immediate gains of the Russian peasantry? The peasantry obtained from the big landowners 75 million hectares of land and from the rich peasants an additional 65 million hectares, making altogether 140 million hectares. Calculated in pre-war roubles the value of this land would amount to 20,000 millions.

Besides this there has been a substantial reduction in Government assessment on land. The Government demand today is half the pre-revolutionary demand. The heavy tribute which the peasants had to pay in the form of rents, interest on mortgages, litigation costs, fines and bribery etc., disappeared altogether. According to Varga the peasants today pay to the town about 800 million gold roubles less than they paid before the revolution.

By these first measures of the agrarian revolution the proletariat liberated the poor peasantry and the landless labourers from the exploitation of the feudal landlord. But the technical basis of agriculture remained unchanged. There were no large scale agricultural farms. The relative weight of Soviet state farms which were brought into existence as model farms was insignificant. The basis of agricultural production was still the millions of small peasant farms with primitive methods. The class contradictions among the peasantry remained. This became clear in the period of foreign intervention. The "kulaki," the rich peasantry, who still dominated the supply of agricultural produce to the market and to the city, began to sabotage and play into the



hands of counter-revolutionary forces. This opposition was overcome by the proletariat in alliance with the village poor and the semi-proletarian strata in the villages. With the help of the committees of the village poor, many of the recalcitrant kulaks were expropriated. The measures of war-communism which were enforced throughout the Soviet territory secured a steady supply of grain and other agricultural produce to the Red Army and the industrial centres. War-communism meant almost military control of the entire industrial apparatus by the proletariat. In the rural areas it meant elimination of the market for the time being and the substitution for the same of a system of state-controlled barter. These measures enabled the proletariat, supported by the poor peasantry and the land labourers, to centralise the entire economic resources of the Union and hurl them against the enemy. This ensured the victory of the proletariat against the counter-revolution.

War-communism was a temporary measure. It ensured the defeat of the counter-revolution; but at the same time the ravages of the counter-revolution led to the disorganisation and decline of industry. Agricultural production was at the lowest ebb. In a backward country like Russia the only guarantee for rapid development of agriculture was the strengthening of industry. In order to do this it was necessary to ensure the supply of agricultural produce and raw materials to the industrial centres. The quickest method of doing this was the stabilisation of agricultural production on the existing basis of individual production. It was for this purpose that the New Economic Policy was introduced. The New Economic Policy reintroduced the market and stabilised the currency. It reintroduced Capitalism in the rural areas, but under safeguards and restrictions. The New Economic Policy however did not mean a wholesale resuscitation of Capitalism in Russia, as the Prosecution represented to this Court. According to Stalin ("Leninism" p. 435) "NEP is a special policy inaugurated by the proletarian state; a policy which is based upon the toleration of Capitalism, while keeping all the commanding positions in the hands of the proletarian state; a policy based upon the struggle between the capitalist and the

socialist elements, upon the increasing predominance of the socialist elements over the capitalist elements.”

In the years of the NEP, capitalist elements could not and did not develop in the sphere of industry. The entire heavy industry with the exception of a few concessions lay in the hands of the proletarian state, and was already working on consistently socialist lines. The same was the case with the transport industry

In the sphere of trade, Capitalism did occupy a strong position during the years 1923-26. But there also a mass cooperative movement, as well as the activity of the trade organs of the state, soon displaced private capital. This process began during the years of NEP, and socialism has now been able to recapture the channels of the circulation of commodities, which connect the town and the village, from the hands of private capital.

In the sphere of agriculture however the socialist sector, i.e. collective farming, continued to occupy an insignificant position right up to 1928. The share of collective production in agriculture did not exceed 3.4% of the total agricultural production in 1928. Similarly, only about 8.9% of the total agricultural production for the market come from the collective farms.

However agricultural production increased steadily, and in most branches outstripped the 1913 level. The excellent functioning of the consumers' cooperatives and the trade organisations of the state maintained a steady supply of raw materials and grain etc. to the industrial centres. This gave industry the necessary respite to develop. In 1927-28 the production figures for all staple industrial products excepting iron and metals surpassed the 1913 level. In iron and metals the index figure for production were 82.3 and 85.5 respectively, the level of 1913 being 100. The iron and steel industry however concentrated on the manufacture of agricultural machines. The production of agricultural machinery in 1927-28 was 136 million roubles as compared with 56 million roubles in 1913. The rapid industrial development in the NEP period created the material basis for the socialisation of agriculture.

The agrarian development of the NEP period was not of a wholesale capitalist nature. This is borne out by the character of

the class differentiation which took place in the villages during this period. The characteristic of capitalist development is the increase in number of the two polar groups, the capitalist farmers on the one hand and the village poor on the other. This process naturally takes place at the cost of the middle peasantry. In the Soviet village we find on the other hand that the number of middle peasants has increased. This is at the same time accompanied by the growth of the kulaki and the proletarian elements in the village. Here are two processes going on side by side. On the one hand the capitalist differentiation, which is impossible to avoid as long as the individual basis of production exists, leading to the growth of the kulaki. On the other hand the opposite process due to the bettering of the conditions of the broad masses of the poor and middle peasants. This last process is the direct result of the support which the proletarian state gave to these classes by the following methods: nationalisation of land, mass cooperative movement, preferential credits, seeds, etc. to the poor peasantry, graded tax, and freedom from tax to the village poor. This process of the class differentiation during the period of NEP will be made clear by the following figures given by Varga in his report on the situation in the U.S.S.R. before the VIth World Congress (P 1204 p. 1120).

<i>Peasant families</i>	<i>1922</i>	<i>1926</i>
No land at all:	4.1 (%)	4.5 (%)
Up to 4 hectares:	81.0	67.0
4 to 8 hectares.	13.0	23.0
8 to 13 hectares:	1.4	5.2
Over 13 hectares:	0.2	0.8

We see that the poor peasantry holding 4 hectares or less decreases from 81 to 67% while simultaneously the middle peasantry increases from 13 to 23%. The kulaki increases from 0.2 to 0.8%.

NEP did lead to a slight strengthening of the kulak. Is this fact sufficient to prove that NEP was a resuscitation of Capitalism in Russia? Through the NEP the proletariat succeeded at the same

time in bettering the economic conditions of the poor and middle peasantry and convincing them that it is capable of helping them and leading them in the right path Through NEP the proletariat succeeded in strengthening the socialist industry, and recapturing a predominant position in the internal trade of the Union, through its co-operatives and its state organs of trade Thus we see that through NEP "an increasing predominance of the socialist element over the capitalist elements" was guaranteed

Thus in 1927 the necessary preconditions for that great step forward, the drive for the collectivisation of agriculture were created The 15th Party Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was able to place two immediate tasks before the proletariat of Russia (1) acceleration of the rapidity of industrialisation, and (2) a far-reaching programme of co-operative production and the organisation of large scale agriculture in "collective farms "

These directions of the Party Conference were immediately translated into action, and the following measures taken in hand (1) Organisation of new large Soviet farms, and especially what are known as "grain factories " The grain factories have been a great success Nowhere in the world does there exist such perfectly mechanised socialistic production (2) Machine stations and tractor stations, which lend machinery to the peasants and thus make large farming possible for the peasants on a co-operative basis (3) Rapid supply of machines and manure to the villages In the year 1928-29, 4000 tractors were given over for agricultural production In 1929-1930 the number rose to 13,000 It is expected that after the completion of the Stalingrad tractor-factory 77,000 tractors will be available for the year 1930-31 The production of artificial manure reached the figure of 1 million tons in 1929-1930 According to the Five Year Plan it will be 9 million tons in 1932-33 (4) Lastly the suppression of the kulak, by levying individual taxes on the kulak farms, further restriction of their rights to rent land from other peasants and to employ wage labour Strict measures were to be enforced against sabotage in the supply of grain Finally the organisation of a bloc of middle peasants and land workers to fight the kulak

These measures fell on fertile land. During the years of the NEP the bond of alliance between the middle peasantry and the proletariat was knit strong. The broad masses of the peasants had now full confidence in the measures of the Soviet State. The nationalisation of land 12 years back had given the first blow to the petty possessor's ideology of the middle peasant. The development of the co-operative movement in the villages, which had now almost completely dislodged private capital from the sphere of trade, had assisted in the process. The harsh measures against the kulak convinced him that the prospects of becoming individually rich at the cost of others were not present in Soviet Russia. He began to think of other perspectives for his farm. These other perspectives he could see before his eyes, in the big Soviet farms, the model collective large scale farms, and the machine and tractor stations. In addition to this he found that the collective farms obtained special tax-concessions from the state, organisational and technical help, as well as seeds, credit, and machines. In this way all factors were now favourable for the middle peasant to join the collectives or take to co-operative production.

All these measures created a tremendous enthusiasm among the masses of the poor and middle peasantry for the collective farm movement. Poor peasants and middle peasants streamed into the collective farms. The process assumed the dimensions of a real popular movement, a movement which the world had never known before, a movement of millions of small peasant farmers towards socialised farming, i.e. towards a collective form of large scale farming, a movement from Asiatic Backwardness to a rational and modern mechanised agriculture.

Up to 1 October, 1928, only 5,94,000 peasant farms, i.e. 2.3% of the total number of farms had been absorbed in the collective farms. On 1 June, 1929, the number of peasant farms which had been absorbed in the collectives had gone up to 19,43,000, i.e. 7.5%. Since then millions of peasant farms have been absorbed in the collectives. According to the latest figures available in the Soviet Year Book of 1930, 40% of the total number of farms were collectivised (see "Soviet Union Year Book" 1930, P 105). "It is

estimated that by 1933 practically the whole area under cultivation will be under-collective or state farms." (ibid, p. 93).

The latest report available to us is 6 months old, but it is quite enough to show the tempo of development. The "Vossische Zeitung" a liberal bourgeois daily, reporting the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. on the 17th June 1931, stated:

"The socialisation of agriculture, which is being pressed forward at maximum speed, has brought in the expected statistical results. In the principal grain producing regions of Russia, i.e. in the Ukraine, North Caucasus, the Volga District and in Crimea, the socialised form of agriculture can now be said to predominate. More than 80 per cent of the total number of farms, and more than 90 per cent of the total area cultivated by peasants in these parts, is now organised in collective farms. In the remaining grain producing territories and in those producing cotton and beet sugar, about 50 per cent of the peasant farms have been collectivised, and the Central Committee expects that by the spring of 1932 these regions will be completely collectivised. Even today, 13 million farms have already been organised in 2,00,000 collectives. Besides there are 4,000 state farms working. Thus the Socialist Sector of Agriculture takes today the first place in the Agrarian Economy of the U.S.S.R. and occupies 70% of the total area under plough."

We have given but a sketchy picture of the gigantic strides which the Russian peasantry have made in alliance with the proletariat, a stride *from serfdom to socialism*. The agrarian revolution freed the poor and middle peasantry from the pre-capitalist exploitation of the landlords. It abolished the heavy tribute which the peasantry had to pay to their feudal masters. It freed the path for development towards large scale modern agriculture. *But this development did not come in Russia under the auspices of Capitalism. The strongholds of Capitalism, banks and industries, were already in the hands of the proletariat.* From this commanding position the proletariat was able to direct the development from small scale to large scale agriculture, avoiding *the same time the capitalist stage. The NEP stage as we have* *avoided of capitalist development. The*

economic policy of the proletariat has always been orientated towards the poor and the middle peasantry, and directed against the kulaks or capitalist farmers. The basis of the NEP was no doubt the small individual peasant producer. Through the ever increasing network of cooperatives, through special credit facilities and technical help to the poor and middle peasant, through the heavy taxes placed on the kulak, the proletarian state succeeded in improving materially the conditions of the broad masses of the poor and middle peasantry. This cemented the alliance between the proletariat and poor and middle peasants, which was the essential pre-condition for the next stage.

The movement for the formation of collective farms was not merely an organisation movement. It involved class struggle, and a bitter class struggle, against the kulaks. The kulaks and the collective farms could not exist side by side. The kulak is a capitalist farmer who employs labour. He enriches himself by the exploitation of the neighbouring village poor. The collective farms organise these very village poor, with their small plots of land, and free them from the exploitation of the kulak. Consolidation of small plots in a large collective farm makes the use of tractors and other agricultural machines possible. Rational methods of agriculture can now be employed. The yield per acre increases. The poor peasant organised in a collective gets better return for his plot and labour than when he was alone, and had to augment his income by sweating for the kulak. The Soviet State tolerated the kulak so long as he was necessary as a supplier of agricultural produce. No sooner do collective farms come into existence and organise agricultural production on a much larger scale, than the kulak becomes superfluous. The kulak with his strong economic position was an authority in the village. He had to a certain extent a commanding position in the village. With the formation of the collective farms, he fades into the background. For these reasons the kulak most bitterly opposed the collective farm movement.

Thus the movement for the "collectivisation" of agriculture can be carried out by the proletariat only with the support of the land workers and poor peasants and in alliance with the middle peasants, because it means the liquidation of the kulaks as a

class Collectivisation means the elimination of the kulak, i.e. the elimination of the last of the line of the capitalist exploiters of the peasantry. Kulaks who offered resistance to this movement either actively or by sabotage, have been expropriated. The expropriations of the kulaks in the present phase of development are of a different character from those of 1918 (the period of war communism). In 1918 the estate and property of the recalcitrant kulak were distributed among the neighbouring poor peasantry. Today they are added as a whole to the much larger unit—the collective farm. In 1918 expropriation of the kulaks led to subdivision, today it leads to socialisation.

The bourgeois press attempted to vilify the peasant movement in Russia by saying that it was accompanied by violent measures against the peasants. The dictatorship of the proletariat is never ashamed to use violent methods—and does use such methods in the campaign for collectivisation—but against whom? Against the exploiter, the bourgeois and the kulak. The proletariat can do so only because it has the fullest cooperation of the poor peasantry and the support of the middle peasants. The basic condition of the alliance of the proletariat and the poor peasantry with the middle peasantry is Lenin's rule—never to employ coercion in relation with the middle peasantry. In fact "convince, not coerce" has been the principal slogan issued to all organisers of the collective farm movement.

The process of transformation of small scale agriculture in large scale modern agriculture, when it takes place under Capitalism is accompanied by the expropriation of the poor peasants, and is based on tremendous exploitation of the poor peasants and land labourers. The law which guides this process is the anarchic law of capitalist competition. Besides, in capitalist society we necessarily have the co-existence of small farms and large farms. In fact the profits of the large farmers are based on the exploitation of their smaller neighbours. Thus in no capitalist country do we as yet see a complete elimination of the unprofitable small farm economy.

The same process is taking place in Soviet Russia—in a planned and organised manner, because it is taking place under the guidance of the proletariat, who today occupy the



commanding positions in the economic life of the country. It is taking place with the enthusiastic cooperation of the broad masses of the poor and middle peasantry, and not at their cost. It is accompanied by the disappearance of the capitalist farmer, and not to his advantage. The proletariat, which controls the socialised urban industry of Russia, is today capable of giving its helping hand of friendship and alliance to the poor and middle peasantry, and of promoting large-scale, rationalised agriculture on the basis of cooperation and of the elimination of all capitalist exploitation in land. As collectivisation and socialisation of agriculture develops, agriculture will reach the level of the urban industries, the distinction between town and countryside will disappear, and agriculture will become a section of the socialist industry. Today in Soviet Russia the programme chalked out by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto, that "Agriculture and urban industry (are) to work hand in hand, in such a way as, by degrees, to obliterate the distinction between town and country," is being translated into practice

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## VI THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The evidence and accusations in connection with our work in the Trade Union Movement form a large part of the subject matter of this case. The principal immediate reasons for the institution of this case was our Trade Union activity; and among the effects which the case has had and will have upon public life in India, those in connection with the Trade Union Movement are the most direct and perhaps the most important.

The subject has however been dealt with in detail in other statements. It is therefore unnecessary to do more than touch upon some generalisations, and bring forward a few points which have not been noticed previously.

It is necessary once again to emphasise that this case is an attack upon the Trade Union Movement. It was launched at a time marked by very great activity on the part of the working-class and the Trade Union Movement. The Government was opposing this

by other means also, such as the Trades Disputes Act, which was condemned by almost all sections of the Trade Union Movement as an attack upon it. Nearly all the accused in this case are Trade Unionists, most of them from the two chief centres of working class activity of that period, Bombay and Calcutta. The time of our arrest coincided in both cases with the preparations for very big strikes in which the employers were the aggressive party. A very large part of the evidence against most of us consists of records of ordinary Trade Union work, which it would be unnecessary to bring forward if it were not intended to condemn it as in some way of a criminal character. Nevertheless the Prosecution have denied that they are attacking the Trade Union Movement and in order to support their denial they have put forward their theory about the "genuine" Trade Union Movement as contrasted with the Communist Trade Union Movement. They are not attacking "genuine Trade Unionism," but only Communism. But, accepting this it means that they are trying to lay down the policy which the Trade Union Movement shall conform to, under pain of being condemned as "Communist," and being liable to prosecution under section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. That is, as we should maintain, in itself an attack of a very serious nature on the movement. If the Prosecution were doing no more than they themselves admit, they would be attacking the Trade Union Movement.

The policy which they are trying in this way to dictate to the Trade Union Movement is of course the same policy which the bourgeois class in all countries tries to make the workers follow. As the Magistrate expresses it, (Committal Order, page 11) "In my opinion a 'genuine Trade Unionist' is one who is primarily concerned with the improvement of the existing conditions of the workers with which his Union is concerned. He is connected with politics only in so far as he aims at getting legislation for such improvement, he creates strikes for the same object."

That is to say, the Trade Union Movement will be allowed to exist on condition that it pursues a policy of sectionalism and reformism, and puts forward no claims which involve a fundamental change in the economic system.

In seeking to restrict the ideas and activities of Trade Unions in this way the Prosecution are acting as they are expected to do But they are quite wrong in claiming that the Trade Union Movement which observes their limitations is the only genuine one Even Mr and Mrs Webb do not support them in that

Actually, as has been shown in a previous statement, the Trade Union Movement in almost all countries in the world has been originally and mainly a revolutionary movement, aiming not only at maintaining or improving the standard of life of its members under Capitalism, but at overthrowing Capitalism and the capitalist political structure, and establishing Socialism and working-class rule

The capitalists and their State organisations have combated the Trade Union Movement by various means, not excluding the most drastic but among others by corruption From the earliest days it has been the capitalist practice to introduce their agents into the Trade Unions, or to buy over in some more subtle way the workers' own leaders These capitalist agents in the workers' movement have not acted mainly as spies but have put forward a definite policy and tried to induce the workers to follow it The policy they always stand for is marked by the very features which distinguish the Prosecution's "Genuine Trade Unionism" mainly reformism an acceptance of Capitalism and sectionalism

At first in most cases this policy on the part of Capitalism had relatively little success The early stages of the growth of industrial Capitalism in almost all countries are marked by a very fierce struggle between a badly organised but instinctively revolutionary working-class, and the armed forces of the capitalists and their State Many of the more backward countries have never got beyond this stage The reformist Labour Movement never publishes itself as the representative of the mass of workers, who continue to conduct an open struggle with Capitalism but in the organised and intermittent manner which conditions of rigorous oppression permit In some few of the most advanced countries only has reformism consolidated its position With the help of the capitalists and the State, which repress the revolutionary movement and otherwise assist reformism, it has risen to the

position which has enabled it to claim more or less plausibly to be the true and genuine Trade Union Movement.

But Engels first pointed out and Lenin subsequently emphasised, it is only certain economic conditions which permit of this consolidation of reformism and the permanent suppression of the revolutionary workers' movement. Capitalism has to reach and maintain a certain level of prosperity before it can supplement its corruption of the working-class leaders by widespread bribery of the masses, and thus induce the majority of the working-class to consent to live under its rule. This level of prosperity can be maintained under Capitalism only by a policy of Imperialism or exploitation of other countries; and only for a certain time, until the general process of expansion of Capitalism gives way to a general decline. While the imperialist system continues to grow and prosper, therefore, reformist Trade Unionism in the leading imperialist countries can also flourish. This was roughly the situation up to the time of the European War of 1914.

Since then however it has become quite evident that the capitalist system as a whole has passed its zenith. A general level of prosperity equal to that of the pre-war decade has, never been reached since. There is good reason to believe that this process will continue, and the economic position of Capitalism as a whole, while showing no doubt some fluctuations will become progressively worse. That being so, the economic conditions for the prevalence of reformism in the Trade Union Movement are also disappearing. It is to be expected that reformism will decline and the revolutionary workers' movement grow in strength. There can be no doubt that is taking place. Since the early days of Capitalism a tremendous advance has been effected in the capitalist technique of dealing with Labour both in the encouragement of reformism and in the suppression of Communism. Especially since the War, when these problems have continually occupied the attentions of statesmen, industrialists and economists, the advance has been very rapid, and all records have been broken in cunning, deceit and violence. In spite of this however the reformist Trade Union Movement has not been able to maintain its position, while the revolutionary movement has generally increased very markedly in strength.

We reply therefore to the Prosecutions' arguments on this subject, that while they could have maintained their theory with some show of possibility two or three decades ago, they can do so no longer. The Trade Union Movement is not naturally a reformist movement. It is naturally and originally a revolutionary movement, and after having become subject for some decades in some countries to a process of perversion and corruption is again returning in the present period to its proper revolutionary policy. The Prosecution cannot be allowed by ingenious misreading of history to disguise the fact that in conducting this case they are actually attacking the true and genuine workers' Trade Union Movement.

In support of this theory of the Trade Union Movement, and in order to create prejudice against us on national grounds, the Prosecution have also argued that the Communist movement is entirely a product of Russian influence. This is the favourite theme of all contemporary anti-Communist propaganda. But it is of course without any actual justification. If the historical facts are examined—as has been done in a previous statement—it will be found that almost all the essential ideas of modern Communism arose with the rise of modern large scale industry in England in the early years of the 19th century. Several of the leaders and writers of the Chartist Movement (1834-48), and of even earlier periods display an acquaintance with much of Communist thought. These ideas were collected and synthesised by Marx and Engels in a way which has required no essential modification since. The working-class movement of their time was largely under their influence, and was to a considerable extent a Communist movement in the full sense.

The 20th century has seen a revival of Communism on a much larger scale. The movement in its modern form has been of course greatly influenced and strengthened by the Russian Revolution. But to say that it owes its existence to the Russian Revolution alone, is absurd. The revival of the revolutionary wing within the International Labour Movement had begun already before the European War of 1914. In spite of the dramatic collapse and betrayal of the International in 1914, there were revolutionary

minorities in opposition to the war in all belligerent countries, including Great Britain. In some countries, such as Italy, the anti-war section had the support of a majority of the organised workers. These anti-war sections of the Labour Movement were meeting together as early as 1915 (the Zimmerwald Conference) and in the same year the appeal began to be made to the Communist minority to break away from the Social Democratic Parties and to form a new International. In this movement the influence of the Russian Bolshevik Party was by no means exclusive or even predominant. Almost all the parties of the belligerent powers were represented at one stage or another. The Commission set up at the Zimmerwald Conference held a session in Stockholm in the summer of 1917, before the Bolshevik Revolution, which took a formal decision to establish the new Third International.

These and many other facts can be cited to show that the Prosecutions' theory on this matter is false. The modern Communist Movement has grown up and is growing in response to the needs of the situation. No movement of the kind can be formed or fostered artificially.

In order to maintain their claim that in prosecuting us they are not attacking the Trade Union Movement, the Prosecution have also put forward the contention that we are not a part of the Trade Union Movement at all, but are "outsiders" who have tried to enter the Trade Unions for ulterior motives. This theme appears also in a circular issued to members of Parliament by Mr. Wedgwood Benn, when Secretary of State for India last year.

In answering it two or three points have to be made. The objection may be brought against the account just given of the Trade Union Movement that it does not at least apply to India. We should not admit that. But we should reply that whatever truth it has is due to the fact that the work of the "outsiders" sent into the Trade Unions by the bourgeoisie has been so prolonged and vigorous. Ever since the stormy beginnings of the mass struggle and organisation of the Indian workers 15 years ago, a great number of bourgeois agents of various sorts, independent humanitarians, Liberals, Theosophists, Congressmen, Communists as well as direct Police agents have been busy corrupting the

movement with their various, but all counter-revolutionary ideas. At any rate we can say that if we are "outsiders" we are not the only ones.

But we claim that as Communists we are not "outsiders" in the same sense as these others are. They are representatives of various bourgeois political or religious reactionary organisations. We are representatives of Communism, the working-class policy itself. Communism has developed in other countries in which industry and the industrial working-class are of longer standing than in India and we by our work try to save the Indian workers the trouble of learning from the beginning what it has taken so long to accumulate elsewhere—just as Indian capitalists when setting up cotton mills do not begin with the primitive apparatus driven by water wheels, which was used in Europe in the 18th century, but instal up-to-date machinery. We owe our existence as a party to two main factors—the developed theory and the example of the Communist movement in the more advanced capitalist countries, and the spontaneous rise of the militant workers' movement in India. We act, as it has been expressed, as a link between the more advanced movement of other countries and the more backward working-class here. This explains incidentally, the apparent anomaly which has not failed to attract the Prosecutions' notice that we happened to be mainly persons of lower middle-class, rather than working-class origin.

The Communist Party is not at all an outside influence in the working-class, or even in the Trade Union Movement. It has of course a clearer idea and a more consistent revolutionary consciousness than the Trade Unions, even at their best. But that is its function. It is the leader of the working-class and the Trade Union Movement, and aims at drawing into its ranks all the most progressive and conscious men in the Trade Unions so that the relations between the two organisations are as close and as natural as possible. Such a body is not in any sense an external force, it is an integral part of the movement.

Following the same line of argument, the Prosecution have further asserted that we are indifferent to the immediate interests of the workers, and that we induce them to strike etc. not for "legitimate" economic reasons, but for political or other purposes.

Now an appeal to the facts will show that in our case this is entirely incorrect. As has been shown at length in other statements, the strikes with which we were concerned, except the one-day demonstration against the Simon Commission in 1928, were of an economic character. They were in almost all cases caused by the employers' aggression—maltreatment, victimisation or attempt to lower rates—and mostly originated in a spontaneous and unorganised manner. Our part was to exert our influence to keep the workers united and assist the organising of strike services such as relief, picketing etc., and in this way to secure the best chance of success for the strike. In some cases the strikes were no doubt prolonged partly in consequence of our work. But that was because in the given conditions a long strike was necessary to achieve any success at all. If the strikes had not been organised, they would have collapsed sooner than they actually did, and the workers would have obtained no benefit. We cannot be held responsible for the obstinacy of the employers.

But this charge is also made in a more general way against us and our policy. It is the theory of the reformists that they are the section who are careful of the immediate interests of the workers while we neglect them in favour of ultimate aims. The Prosecution also contrasted our policy with reformism in the same sense. Now no doubt a study of the expressed policies of reformism and Communism may give some ground for coming to this conclusion. Communism puts before itself the revolution and the preparation for the revolution as its highest aim, to which all other partial or immediate aims must if necessary be sacrificed. Reformism on the contrary puts forward no such ultimate aim, and professes to be exclusively concerned with immediate matters. This is the theory. But in practice it is hard to believe that any circumstances are likely to arise under Capitalism in which the interests of the revolution would demand a sacrifice of the immediate economic interests of the workers. In general the cause of the revolution is advanced if and so far as the workers fight for their immediate economic interests. On the other hand, the reformists' innocence of ultimate aims of a revolutionary character usually involves in practice that they are not willing to put up a fight at all. They will fight even for the immediate



interests of the workers, only if the workers themselves are determined on it. Even in that case, experience shows that they will sabotage the workers' fight if they can. Some reformists—the more consistent—will claim that they have a better way than that of fighting, namely co-operation. They will press for the institution of machinery for consultation with the employers and conciliation and arbitration and by these means will hope to achieve all that militant workers' movement will get, and more.

Improvements are obtained by these means, on occasions, there is no doubt. But broadly it is true to say that the workers can improve their position under Capitalism, or maintain it against economic adversity, only so far as they give the employers cause to fear them. If they are militant they can get concessions from the employers, not otherwise. Reformist leaders can take advantage of the militancy of the workers to get results through their own reformist machinery. But unless they have the sanction of the strength and will to fight of the workers behind them, they can get nothing. Reformists realise this and some of them may make efforts to maintain the militant spirit among the workers. But their whole outlook on the labour movement and social affairs is against this policy. They do not believe in the overthrow of Capitalism. Therefore they must believe in promoting the prosperity of Capitalism which according to the capitalist means equality of sacrifice for all especially the workers. They believe in the machinery of co-operation and conciliation—Geneva Whitley Councils and so on and however they may try, they cannot reconcile these things with a real militant struggle by the workers.

The actual situation therefore is the reverse of that which the reformists and the Prosecution claim. By our policy of encouraging and organising the militancy of the workers we bring about the optimum conditions for the achievement of improvements and the maintenance of the workers' standards under Capitalism. By their policy of encouraging trust in conciliation and the employers' good will and the like, and discouraging a militant policy, the reformists tend to set up conditions in which the best results, even under Capitalism, cannot be obtained.

This general statement is fully borne out by the facts both in the countries of advanced Capitalism and in India. In conditions of prosperity the reformist leaders are able to secure improvements and concessions. But in conditions of adversity and trade depression they fail to put up a serious resistance to the capitalist demands for wage cuts and speeding up and on the contrary assist in carrying out the capitalists' wishes. It is in these conditions which prevail now in all capitalist countries of the world that the workers begin to realise that our theoretical account of the nature of reformism is not an exaggeration but solid truth. The reformists are "the agents of Capitalism within the working-class. As such they cannot fight Capitalism effectively, even for immediate demands and economic interests. We on the contrary can and do fight Capitalism on any issue, immediate or ultimate with all forces. Our policy is consequently more effective. This accusation therefore is also false.

In short the attitude taken up by the Prosecution towards the Trade Union Movement is untenable and absurd throughout. This is natural, as their position in connection with it is most shaky. Several lines of Government policy converged to produce this case, as has been shown elsewhere, but the most important was that arising from the situation in the Trade Union Movement. It is in a sense the central issue in this case. Yet the policy of the Government on this question is in direct contradiction to their professions, and the Prosecution have to maintain this contradictory attitude.

The Government claim to tolerate and even to encourage the Trade Union Movement, and the Prosecution have to profess the same ideas. Yet the case is actually undertaken mainly because of Trade Union work of a perfectly ordinary and legal kind. The fact is that the Trade Union Movement and especially the unions with which we were connected were becoming a nuisance to certain influential groups of capitalists, both Indian and British in Bombay and in Calcutta. As our actions were entirely lawful they could do nothing against us directly, though they tried to implicate us in false cases of rioting, train-wrecking and the like and also incited hired hooligans against us. They therefore began to exert

pressure on the Government. They conducted a campaign of propaganda of a personally abusive character against us, in their press and in the Assembly, Councils, European Associations, and Chambers of Commerce. They accused us of being responsible for the railway accident at Belur on the E I R in 1928, and for the communal riot in Bombay in February 1929 (though actually we were very active and were perhaps the most potent influence in keeping the peace and quelling the riot). They openly demanded our deportation, internment, preventive restraint etc., and finally prosecution for conspiracy against the State. The first result was the Public Safety Bill which failed only by chance, and the second was this case. There can be no doubt about it. Other questions are involved and other aspects of the case and the movement have since developed importance but the origin of the whole thing, the real reason why the case was launched, was that the Trade Unions in 1928 were causing inconvenience to certain influential capitalists who accordingly took measures among which was our arrest to save their profits. The Prosecution are therefore in an untenable position. Hence their weird theories about the Trade Union Movement. Enough has been said to show their falsity. But it is necessary to develop some points more fully as mis-understanding about Communist Trade Union policy is not confined to the Prosecution.

### **Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, as Opposed to Reformist**

#### *Social Theory*

The Prosecution, because of their colossal ignorance of what Trade Unionism is and stands for, have made it necessary for us to explain what the policy of revolutionary Trade Union Movement is as opposed to the reformist Trade Union Movement. The matter can be summed up under two heads as follows. The reformist Trade Union Movement stands for the consolidation, development and maintenance of the present system of exploitation (Capitalism), while the Communist or revolutionary Trade Union Movement stands for the complete destruction of this system replacing it by the rule of the workers (Communism).

It is not sufficient however for us to dismiss the subject with this bald statement, it is necessary for us to place our viewpoint clearly before the Court. It is true in fact to say that these two policies, the policy of reformist Trade Unionism and the policy of revolutionary Trade Unionism, reflect the different stages of development of the working-class which is leading to the destruction of bourgeois society. It is not easy to apply this formula to the extremely young Trade Union Movement in India though from its early days up till recently the striking feature is the fact that this working-class movement has suffered most from the fact that its leadership has been almost entirely bourgeois. The historical detail dealing with the development of the Indian Trade Union Movement has been dealt with by others, and will be dealt with by us here later. It may however be necessary for us in explaining our point to touch upon it here.

Let us first take the reformist Trade Union Movement. The similar sections of the movement throughout the world have more or less, followed along the same lines and the same policy. This policy, the policy of the reformist Trade Unions is typically exemplified by the I.F.T.U. (Amsterdam) who maintain that the present world economic crisis, the greatest in history a crisis which has affected every country in the world and shaken the foundations of the greatest powers is just another period of temporary stagnation, which periodically recurs under Capitalism. And they consider it to be their duty to assist it over this period of "temporary" crisis, to try and patch up what they consider to be only a passing instability of the capitalist system. It is because of this that we find the reformists advocating the principle that the workers should accept reductions in wages and longer hours of work.

It is interesting to note that preceding the present economic crisis, the capitalists with the support of the reformist Trade Unions carried out a furious rationalisation drive. This imposition of rationalisation caused great suffering to the working-class speeding up, lower wages and longer hours. But they were told by the reformists that this "rationalisation" was necessary to help to stabilise Capitalism, the bogey of foreign competition was brought

forward, and lastly, if the workers would only adopt rationalisation a period of unprecedented prosperity would follow for them. This is what the reformists told the workers in 1927. What have been the results of following this policy of class-collaboration of the reformists? Has that period of prosperity as promised arrived? No. The very opposite has happened. And today we find the workers faced with another capitalist offensive. The reason for this can only be explained in the following way,—rationalisation means inflated production, worsened conditions and mass unemployment generally for the working-class, which in its turn means reduced purchasing power,—the result is over-production which is one of the main causes of the present world economic crisis. This has now become so clear that even the reformists admit it. In 1926 Dr. Hilferding, the principal theorist of the Labour and Socialist International wrote in support of rationalisation as a means of strengthening Capitalism. He said "What we want is a strong, and not pauperised and decadent Capitalism, because it is always pleasing for the hen that his inheritance should be as rich as possible." He considered that Capitalism had a long lease of life and could not be overthrown. It has to "grow over" into Socialism, and hence must be assisted to grow strong—by rationalisation.

But now they have been compelled to admit the truth. The Resolution of the 4th Labour and Socialist International Congress (August 1931) says in so many words that rationalisation has failed to bring what it promised, but has increased unemployment and spread want and misery among the working-class. This does not mean of course that their policy has changed. They still trust in the League of Nations and appeal to the capitalists to institute economic democracy.

In the face of this crisis Capitalism is trying to mitigate the effects upon itself by delivering further vicious attacks upon the workers. Huge armies of workers throughout the world are unemployed, where social insurance exists, it is being reduced or completely abolished, where no social insurance exists the bourgeois State is refusing any assistance to the unemployed. This is being done with little or no opposition from the reformists and

in some cases with their assistance. With the support of the reformist Unions, the capitalists are introducing a system of short-time working; wages are being further attacked and every effort is being made to reduce the standard of living of the workers to the lowest possible limit.

The reformist theory that the conditions of the workers will gradually improve under Capitalism, that the present or past economic crises of the capitalist system are things that we should assist in patching up, has been utterly smashed by the march of events. The present crisis has exposed the fact that Capitalism has become a hindrance to the development of the productive forces of society, that even a partial improvement within the framework of Capitalism is only possible at the expense of a still further worsening of the conditions of the workers. We look upon these periodical crises of the capitalist system as denoting the approach of its collapse. Our policy is not therefore to assist it to recover and bring it back to health again, but to take advantage of the crisis and assist it out of its misery quickly by ending the present state of society, thus assisting the workers out of their state of misery.

The policy of reformism stands in direct contradiction to all the teachings of history itself. Facts given in connection with the class-struggle, the International Trade Union Movement and the Indian Trade Union Movement, show that the development of events leads not to the gradual improvement of the conditions of the workers but rather to the worsening of their conditions. This has been shown by the world-wide attack upon the conditions of the workers during the last ten years assisted by the reformists in their attempts to save Capitalism during the periodical crises, which are becoming ever more intense. In India the policy of reformism during these attacks upon the workers' conditions has resulted in a steady retreat. Where resistance to these attacks was put up by the workers, we find that for the period 1921-30 the Government of India figures show that two-thirds of the strikes that took place are classified as unsuccessful. Further when considering this question we must take into account the enormous number of instances where the workers were prevailed upon by the reformists not to

resist and as a result had imposed upon them lower wages, longer hours, rationalisation and retrenchment, without a struggle. It is in this way that the reformists try to restore to health and to attempt to bring back a further period of normal operation of the capitalist system at the expense of the working-class. This is obviously the wrong way. The correct way is offered by the revolutionary Trade Unions, by the maximum resistance of the workers to any attempt to impose further worsened conditions upon them, the maximum resistance to hunger and poverty and by the overthrow of Capitalism and the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

### **The Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, as opposed to Reformist**

#### *Functions and Aims*

It is necessary for us to put forward our ideas as to the functions and aims of Trade Unions. The Prosecution while stating the case against us, the Magistrate while committing us, as also some of the accused, who claim adherence to the reformist school of thought, because it offers them a possible way to acquittal—have all conspired together to place on record an entirely erroneous idea of the functions and aims of the Trade Union Movement. From the reformist side there is a diversity of opinions as to the functions of Trade Unions. In different countries the reformists maintain different positions. In France for instance the reformist understands that a trade union is an organisation that fights for the improvement of legal, social and political rights enjoyed by the workers, with the final point that Trade Unions should endeavour to bring about the emancipation of the workers. In America one finds that the American Trade Unionist considers the Trade Union organisation as a means of improving the conditions of Labour, and to attempt to establish peaceful relations and collaboration between Labour and Capital, at the same time using any bourgeois political organisation to attain its ends. The Trade Unionists of Great Britain would maintain that they are out to establish socialism, but only through the capitalist Parliamentary machine. They have established their

own political party, the Labour Party, but all their actions must be strictly in accordance with the principles laid down by the bourgeois State. As to the Trade Unions they accept the policy of class collaboration, while at the same time they claim that they are fighting for the improvement of the general conditions of the workers.

As to the reformist Indian Trade Unions they have adopted all that is bad and enfeebling from the reformist Trade Unions of other countries. Thus we find that the newly formed Indian Trade Union Federation under the direction of Joshi, Bakhale, G. M. Shiva Rao and Co. has for its objects among other things to generally improve the economic and social conditions of the workers. Then they consider that they should endeavour to establish some measures such as the nationalisation of land mines, minerals, railways etc. But how are these and other things to be achieved? The methods of attainment according to the Federation shall be, "by constitutional, democratic and recognised Trade Union methods," whatever they may mean. Nowhere in any of these examples of adherence to reformism in the Trade Unions do we find any inkling of such a thing as the class-struggle. The reformists claim that the Trade Unions are organisations for the improvement of Labour conditions, but even in this limited sphere because of their sabotage they have no right to even this claim. We have only to mention their activities in relation to the many disputes that have taken place, wherein the struggle of the workers has been sabotaged, the S I R strike, 1928, Kharagpur E I R, G I P, the different textile strikes and so on. Our position is that the Trade Unions are organisations intended to fight for the betterment of the conditions of Labour of the workers by all means, and we have shown by our participation and leadership of all the unions that we have been connected with, that this is so.

The Communist leadership in the Trade Unions does support the policy of fighting for the immediate demands for improvement of the conditions of Labour of the workers, for social and political reforms. But while this is so, while we support the policy of rallying the workers into the Trade Unions on the basis of their immediate demands for improved conditions, we mention that the



most important function is for the overthrow of the capitalist system, it being a fact that there cannot be any real or lasting gains under Capitalism.

It may be argued that by pursuing the policy as outlined we underestimate the importance of the struggle of the workers for immediate demands or that we miss the possibility of obtaining for the workers success in their struggle for the same. Further it may be said by the reformists that we sacrifice the workers in this respect for our political programme. But we claim that we do understand the importance of rallying the workers for the struggle on a programme of immediate demands on fundamental questions, wages, hours of labour, legislation etc. while maintaining our political stand and it is because of this that we say we can bring the greatest measure of success to the working-class.

### **Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, as opposed to Reformist**

#### *Relations with Employers*

How do employers tackle the Trade Union question? The capitalists see in the growth of Trade Unions among the workers the development of a force that can and does threaten their very existence. The capitalists as a class have no doubt as to the menace that the organised workers offer to them. They recognise in the Trade Unions their class enemy and the deal with them as such. There is no need for us to go into the methods adopted to crush the early growth of the Trade Unions. This has been fully dealt with elsewhere. Apart from the use of the forces of the state against the Trade Unions, which we shall deal with later, there are many subtle and effective methods adopted by the employers to try and counteract their power. The growing alarm of the capitalists of Great Britain was shown in the report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry, "Britain's Industrial Future." On page 143 it speaks of the "frequency and duration of industrial stoppages", and is perturbed by the marked increase in the amount of working time lost in Great Britain owing to industrial disputes, especially since the War. In reading the report further we are able to see what lines the employers desire to follow to meet the menace of organised Labour. The crude method of "collective bargaining" as

it is described—the eternal tug of war between highly organised rival forces—has to be effectively controlled. But how can this be done? It can only be done by the Trade Unions agreeing to co-operate with the employers in working some agreed system of conciliation and arbitration. And it is in this co-operation with the employers—class-collaboration—that the reformist leaders of the Trade Unions have found their goal. For many years the principles of conciliation and arbitration have acted with a deadening effect upon the British Trade Union Movement. In the iron and steel, cotton and boot and shoe trades, boards of arbitration and conciliation operated with arrangements which provided for the settlement of wage question etc. The railways have tried several experiments, conciliation machinery was established as early as 1907, which eventually broke down. Later in 1921 on the basis of the Whitley Scheme Central and National Wages Boards were set up. It was during the abnormal period of the war in 1916 that Whitleyism was introduced. A Committee on Industrial Relations was instituted by the Parliament under the chairmanship of Mr J H Whitley whose main task was to recommend methods for conciliating industrial disputes. The main proposal of this committee was the establishment of Joint Industrial Councils composed of equal numbers from both sides—employers and workers. These councils in the first place existed not for the purpose of conciliation, but rather for the purpose of regular consultation and co-operation. They did function for a short time as the machinery for conciliation and arbitration during perhaps the most difficult periods which followed the war.

The Whitley Councils, supported by the reformist Trade Unions in co-operation with the employers, played an important part during the years when the fiercest industrial strife was in progress, immediately after the war. They played the role of weakening the resistance of the workers to the attacks that were launched upon the workers' conditions. After they had served this purpose they all but broke down. Out of 74 councils that were brought into being 27 collapsed and the remainder are in a comatose condition. From the Whitley Council there was set up under the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, the Industrial Court. The

first permanent Arbitration Court set up in England. A later development, owing to the failure of Whitleyism, was the independent attempt to establish some machinery. A National Industrial Council was set up,—the great Employers' Associations on the one hand under Mond, and the reformist Trade Unions under the direction of Ben Turner. This was in 1928 and came to be known as Mondism. Through the machinery of a National Industrial Council and the arbitration committees connected with this Council, the reformist Trade Union leaders dragged the unions into co-operation with the employers on the question of rationalisation, and facilitated the attack of the employers upon the conditions of the workers. This open sabotage on the part of the reformists was vigorously opposed by the revolutionary element in the unions. But the net result of this attempted collaboration of the reformist Trade Union leaders with the employers was that the workers were forced to accept the rationalisation and worsened conditions: the fight of the organised worker to maintain his conditions was sabotaged and many workers left the Trade Unions in disgust.

The treacherous work of the reformist Trade Union leaders in transforming the unions into organs of class collaboration and breaking the resistance of the workers was not only confined to Great Britain. For instance, the Reformist Confederation of Labour in France was affiliated to the National Economic Council and so on. In India the reformist leaders, Joshi & Co. were actively supporting the policy of establishing legislation on the lines of the English Industrial Courts Acts of 1919 and this was followed by their co-operation on the Whitley Commission. In many places in India the reformist Trade Union leaders have lent their support to the machinery of conciliation and arbitration.

By far the worst example, and this is the example that has been by far the most beneficial to the employers and of the greatest detriment to the workers, is that of the Ahmedabad Textile workers. This is a permanent Arbitration Board, consisting of one nominee of the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Union and one nominee of the Ahmedabad Mill-owners' Association. This Board has been in operation since 1920 and it is interesting to note that

M. K. Gandhi has represented the Union on the Board since the beginning. And we find that this permanent Arbitration Board was responsible for—among other things—imposing a cut in the wages of the Ahmedabad Textile workers in 1923 of 15 per cent. The Whitley Commission Report refers to this Board on pages 336-37 and says: "The system is admirable in its intentions and has had a substantial measure of success (From the employers' point of view). It has been criticised as being somewhat dilatory in its operation; of the complaints pending at the beginning of 1929 50 were said to have been outstanding since 1922." Other experiences of joint machinery are those of Messrs. Tata & Co. at Jamshedpur and the Buckingham and the Karnatic Mills in Madras. In Madras the Textile Labour Union co-operated with the employers in the same ways at Ahmedabad, to the detriment of the workers.

It is through this door of Mondism and Whitleyism, through Boards of arbitration and conciliation, that the reformist leaders are trying to take the Trade Unions, transforming them into organs of class-collaboration, sabotaging the economic struggle of the workers with the ultimate object of the complete subjugation of the Trade Unions to the employers and the capitalist State and so to the destruction of the Trade Unions as fighting organisations.

In June of last year, the report of the Whitley Commission was published, and among the many recommendations, there are those which deal with the setting up of machinery to deal with industrial disputes on the lines of the old Whitley committees, wage boards etc. Where Trade Unions exist, the recommendation considers that the employers should seek their collaboration and co-operation in the establishment and working of works committees. Alongside this joint machinery, the Government should lose no opportunity of utilising their power to appoint boards or courts of arbitration and conciliation and of making these courts permanent under the Trades Disputes Act.

While on the one hand the reformist Trade Union leaders are clamouring for the Government to put into operation the recommendations of the Whitley Commission, on the other hand the employers maintain that the recommendations as a whole are too

drastic. Therefore the Government are doing nothing. But the fact remains that as far as the machinery for co-operation and class-collaboration is concerned, some employers are operating it, and as the reformist Trade Union leaders become more and more embarrassed by pressure for action from the rank-and-file workers they will direct the workers into this channel. In relation to the question of Whitleyism and Mondism, of "impartial" courts of arbitration and conciliation and of joint works committees or any other form of class-collaboration and co-operation with the employers, whether the bait be as in the case of Tata Company, i.e. profit sharing and Company Unionism or as in the case of the Ahmedabad Textile workers "Gandhi Raj," our attitude is one of complete opposition. The reformists follow this path of class-collaboration for two main reasons, one, the fear that the leadership of the Trade Unions might pass into the hands of the Communists and to show to the employers that they have the workers in hand and the other is that by this policy they hope to throttle any militant movement on the part of the workers as soon as possible.

As Communists we claim that the Trade Union organisation of the workers must be entirely free. Their power lies in efficient organisation within the factory, work shop, mill, mine, ship or wherever the workers may be employed. They have no need to take advice from capitalists such as Mond, Whitley or Tata on the question of the method of producing the best kind of machinery for either bargaining or for fighting. After all is said and done, behind this machinery of class-collaboration of Joint Councils, Boards and Courts—so useful to the employers and supported by the reformists—there always loom up the two powers irreconcilably antagonistic to one another which dictate that the conclusion of any of these forms of collaboration must be dependent for their validity upon the prospect of being enforced by strike or lockout, there are no other means of enforcement.

In concluding this point we maintain that the workers must, where there Trade Unions have been following a path of class-collaboration, drag their unions away. Workshop, factory, mill, mine and ship committees must be established by the workers

themselves, entirely free of any connection with the employers. The factory committees must be elected from the workers direct by Shop-stewards or Shop-delegates. Any attempt on the part of the employers or reformists to turn the factory committees into tools of class-collaboration must be counteracted. The class character of the factory committee must be preserved.

These factory committees will be the centre of the struggle for the everyday demands of the workers in the factory or workshop, embracing both organised and unorganised workers, drawing them into the revolutionary class-struggle. A further development should be an alliance between the factory committees of all factories and workshops, under one concern or trust, for the purpose of common action against concentrated capital; at the same time each individual factory committee must be retained in each factory and workshop. Conferences should be convened of factory committees for various districts, industries and also on a national scale, in particular in connection with the ripening conflicts between Capital and Labour.

At the same time it is necessary to fight for the recognition of the factory committees by the employers and for their legal existence, to protect members of the factory committees from victimisation. If this is done and the activity of the revolutionary workers in the factory strengthened, the workers will have no use for Whitleyism or Mondism. The factory committees under the guidance of the revolutionary Trade Union Movement must become the basis of the industrial structure of the Unions and must play a decisive part in the period of a direct revolutionary situation in the struggle for the introduction of the workers control over production, and the passing of industrial establishment into the hands of the working-class.

### **Revolutionary and Reformist Trade Unionism—Relations with State**

As Communists we are under no illusion as to the role of the State. We stand by the position as put forward by Marx: "The State is the organ of class domination, the organ of oppression of one class by another. Its aim is the creation of order which

legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between the classes" ("State and Revolution" page 10) To complete the picture the reformists step in and with their theory of the "conciliation of classes by the State" try to link up the Trade Union Movement with the State

The question of the attitude of the Trade Unions towards the State comes under two heads (1) legislation, social reforms hours conditions of labour etc, anti-labour legislation etc, (2) the attempts to draw the Trade Unions in as a part of the capitalist State machine through the I L O, R T C, Whitley Commission etc

The Prosecution for general propaganda purposes trotted out with that age old bourgeois theory about the State being some supposedly detached and impartial 'third party' whose function was as the Prosecution Counsel said 'to guard the liberties and rights of all the citizens' What however has the State done to justify this statement of the Prosecution? Is there any foundation for it? In the organisation of the Trade Unions the capitalists saw their class enemy becoming a force and a menace And as early as 1799 in Great Britain they invoked the aid of the State with the result that Combination Acts were passed, which made all forms of Trade Union illegal In 1824 these Acts were repealed but the workers were still exposed to prosecution for conspiracy for strike action etc Ever since this time the struggle with the State has gone on in a ding dong fashion—sometimes the workers have gained a point and sometimes they have lost but always the power remains with the State to crush any forward move of the workers

In India legislation in this respect is very small and the best example is the Trade Disputes Act of 1929 So much for legislation to attempt to control and suppress the working class movement What has the State done in relation to general conditions of labour? It is a fact, and history stands to witness to it that no social reform, no legislation for the protection or improvement of the conditions of the working class has been passed unless it has been forced by the most bitter and determined struggle on the part of the workers In India one other factor has

actuated the passing of certain meagre legislation in this respect and that is the pressure of the capitalists in the home country. This legislation has been dealt with fully elsewhere. Throughout the history of the working-class movement we have sufficient examples of the work of this impartial and detached "third party." All the forces of the State have been used to crush the rising working-class movement. The army and the police force have been used on innumerable occasions to shoot down and baton the workers in the interests of the employers. What we are concerned with is the attitude of the reformist leaders on this question. And in this aspect their policy is especially obvious during the post-war years. Subtle efforts have been made in many countries to draw the Trade Union Movement in as a part of the bourgeois State machine, to work out whatever legislation may have been introduced, to adjust the activities of the Trade Unions to fit in with the anti-labour legislation etc.

The workers are told that their grievances will be redressed by legislation as a means to prevent them from taking direct action, and as a reward for this betrayal of the workers the reformist leaders are given a seat in the Assembly or a free trip to Geneva. The policy of reformism is manifested in their eagerness to co-operate with the Government to go to Geneva. I L O is 'representatives of Labour or to act as representatives on such bodies as the Whitley Commission and the R T C' at the bidding of the Government and the employers in the name of Labour. As the capitalist crisis deepens so will the attacks upon the workers' conditions assume a more stubborn and brutal form. The forces of the State will be used to this end, legislation controlling and limiting hours of labour and conditions of work will be removed. Practically everywhere already the 8-hour working day has been withdrawn. The recommendations of its own Whitley Commission and the I L O will be ignored. Further Acts prohibiting the right of the workers to defend themselves will be introduced (Trade Disputes Acts of Great Britain and India). (A resolution was forced at the Jharia Trade Union Congress by the revolutionary Trade Unions calling for a general strike against the Trade Disputes Act. This was passed but action was sabotaged



by the reformists ) And as in many other countries (Italy, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and elsewhere) the workers will be deprived of even the right to possess their own class Trade Unions or to call a strike And with the aid of the reformists, anti-labour arbitration of a compulsory nature will be introduced by the State, as in the U S A with the co-operation of the American Federation of Labour

In all these the reformist leaders are acting as the allies and agents of the employers, making every effort to destroy the resistance of the workers, which is only a preliminary to the smashing up of the working-class organisations In this the treacherous role of the reformists Trade Union bureaucracy is emphasised We realise the importance of this drive of the State with the co-operation of the reformists against the working-class And as against submission and co-operation with the reformist Trade Unions the only alternative is for the concentration of all the forces of all the workers to fight against the least direct restriction of the right of combination and of strike by means of legislation (which come under the guise of compulsory arbitration, legal protection for 'blacklegs, legislative sanction for Fascist methods for crushing the struggle of the working-class), and against reformist leadership of the workers' struggle and for its conduct in the spirit of the revolutionary class-struggle

Even though we have used these arguments against the State to explain its true class-character, this does not mean to say that the working class should not press for a programme of immediate demands for legislation affecting the general body of workers The legislation in respect of working conditions in India as we have shown is extremely low in comparison to other countries, therefore a programme of demands for comprehensive social legislation should be popularised and a struggle on this basis initiated This programme of demands should consist of, among other things, the following demands

(1) Limitation of the working day to 8 hours for adults and 6 hours for youths Introduction of the 6 hours working day in all harmful industries, including coalmines, and free supply of milk and butter to the workers in these industries.

(2) Complete freedom of Trade Unions, demonstrations, picketing and strikes.

(3) Equal pay for equal work for women, youths and men.

(4) Complete abolition of compulsory contract labour and systems of legal bondage of the workers.

(5) A compulsory weekly rest period at full pay and a paid annual holiday of four weeks for adults and six weeks for youths.

(6) State insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident, industrial disease, old age, loss of working capacity, orphanage, and compensation for disablement.

(7) Establishment of a State minimum wage of Rs. 50/- a month, prohibition of the contract system and establishment by law of weekly payment of wages.

(8) Prohibition of deductions from wages for any reason or purpose whatsoever (fines for bad work etc.).

(9) Introduction of properly organised factory inspection, workers elected members thereof, to supervise labour conditions in all factories employing hired labour.

(10) The abolition of the system of hiring workers through jobbers, sarangs, etc., employment and dismissal of workers to take place through labour exchanges, controlled and supervised by the Trade Unions. Abolition of all caste and feudal customs and regulations within the factories. In addition, the Communist Party of India supports and fights for each and every demand intended to improve the conditions of the workers (building of new houses at Government or employers expense, provision of proper lavatories, clean dining rooms etc.). The Communist Party of India is definitely against the principle of arbitration and interference by capitalist arbitration courts. It emphasises most definitely that the sole means of securing any serious concessions on the part of the exploiters is resolute class-struggle by strikes and mass revolutionary activities.

To make our position quite clear on the question of fighting for immediate demands we will use the words of Marx: "Trade Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a

guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working-class—that is to say ultimate abolition of the wage system.” (“Essentials of Marx” page 170) This is our position. The fight for a programme of immediate demands or the partial struggles of the working-class is not the be-all and end-all as the reformists view it, but it is only a means to an end—the overthrow of the bourgeois state of society.

### **Reformist and Revolutionary Trade Unionism—Trade Unions and Politics**

The Prosecution while expounding the case against have tried to read some sinister meaning in the connection between the Communist Party of India and the Workers’ and Peasants’ Parties and the Trade Unions in which we were active. As a matter of fact the question has been fully dealt with by others, but it is necessary for us to deal with it, not so much from the point of view which the Prosecution or the Committing Magistrate put on the question, but more so from the difference between the reformists and ourselves on the question.

It has been shown that the bourgeoisie have from time to time tried to impose limitations and restrictions upon the Trade Unions, that they should accept the capitalist state without question and have no other desire than only that of trying to get some remedial legislation passed.

What however is the attitude of the reformist Trade Unions in this matter and their difference with the Revolutionary Trade Unions? The reformists are convinced that the best means of realising the task facing the working-class is to come to some agreement with the bourgeoisie, by co-operation, and to develop democratic forms of Government, which they consider will give an opportunity to the working-class of becoming possessed of the economic resources of each country and by this means lead to the establishment of so-called industrial democracy.

From what we have already said, this programme stands in direct irreconcilable contradiction to all the teachings of the

history itself and the development of events is leading not to the gradual improvement of the conditions of the workers, not to democracy, but rather to the collapse and overthrow of Capitalism, and to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. It is natural therefore that as our promises and aims are so widely different the solution of the difficulties facing the workers must be based on widely different ways.

A part of our crime according to the Prosecution is that we introduced politics into the Trade Unions. It is only natural that the bourgeoisie should try and limit the activities of the working class movement. It is not however natural that Trade Unionists themselves should agree to the imposition of these limitations or that of their own free will they should institute them. Nevertheless it is a fact that the reformists do follow a policy of limiting the scope and activity of the Trade Unions and to face them with economic task only, at the same time trying to ignore whatever political groups there may be. This is what is termed "neutrality," and is in fact an attempt to drag the Trade Union Movement away from its general class-struggle, that is to say away from the political task, and to concentrate its attention entirely on economic problems, standing aside from political parties and groups.

In following this policy of "neutrality," the reformists are in fact carrying out the work of the bourgeoisie who always endeavour to preserve the Trade Unions against political infection and to get them to pay attention only to economic problems, wages, hours etc. It is however not possible for the Trade Unions to maintain this attitude of "neutrality," and this has been proved from the Trade Union history of all countries, especially Great Britain, U.S.A. and Germany, where the most determined attempts have been made to develop this policy of "neutrality". In reality the Trade Unions there have never really been neutral. Wherever it has been attempted the result has been to play into the hands of the capitalists.

Another term used by those who desire to keep the Trade Union Movement divided from politics is that of "independence". This policy of independence is closely allied to neutrality and follows more or less the same lines.

But what after all is politics and what is economics? It is not possible to divide the one from the other. The position has been aptly defined that "politics is concentrated economics". The struggle of the working-class for an 8-hour day and a minimum wage is the same as the struggle for the confiscation of the factories, workshops and the railways. An economic struggle is also at the same time a political struggle.

It will be found that the bourgeoisie have in all their legislation in relation to the Trade Union Movement tried to prevent any political organisation of the workers developing alongside the Trade Unions and in recent years it found expression in anti-Trade Union Act in Great Britain in 1927. By this Act the Trade Unions were prevented from collecting the political levy and the contracting in principle was introduced. In the Trade Disputes Act of 1928-29, clauses were included preventing the use of money for political purposes. This however cannot prevent the working-class from building their own political organisations.

Political parties in connection with the Trade Union Movement have been developed by the reformists and Social Democrats in France, Britain, Norway, Belgium and so on. In Great Britain the Trade Unions are collectively linked up with the Labour Party. But in pursuance of the policy of betrayal, the reformists and Social Democrats have transformed these parties into leading parties of Capitalism, not only from a political point of view but also from the point of view of social composition. Thus we find today Mr. MacDonald of the British Labour Party leading a Tory Government, and the late Labour Government assisting in every way the capitalist drive against the conditions of the British workers, reducing the social insurance of unemployment and betraying every interest of the working-class. It has outdone all capitalist political parties in its policy of ruthless repression in the colonies, especially India. This story can today be told in reference to all countries where Social Democratic or Labour Parties exist. They have in fact become the pillars of Capitalism.

It is quite clear that on the question of politics the Trade Unions cannot on any account remain neutral. On the other hand it is equally clear that we must prevent the working-class from being betrayed by the reformists and Social Democrats. Unfortunately the Indian Trade Union Movement has been infested by a conglomeration of persons with diverse political connections. We have N. M. Joshi and Co. from the Liberal Party, Shiva Rao and his friends from the Theosophical Society, S. C. Bose, M. K. Gandhi and others of the Indian National Congress, with a few loyalists and direct agents of the employers. The organised working-class must make a determined effort to shake off these reformist agents of the employers and the other extraneous political influences.

The Young Indian Trade Union Movement must profit by the costly lessons bought by the working-class of other countries by not following them into the morass of betrayal at the hands of the reformists and Social Democrats. As the working-class of necessity established its own organisation—the Trade Unions—for economic defence, so they must build their own political party—the Communist Party.

This process has already begun. The working-class is separating itself from the other classes and influences with great difficulty, and is being organised into an independent class force. Though the process of liberating itself from the Liberal reformist influence of N. M. Joshi and Co. and the bourgeois nationalist influence of Bose, Gandhi, Ruikar and Co., though the process is slow, it is taking place. It is the task of this party to draw the entire working-class into the movement and to lead it to victory over the bourgeoisie, and after victory to lead the working-class forward to its final objective—Communism.

### **Relations with the Party**

We understand the Trade Unions as being broad mass organisations of the working-class having specific tasks on the basis of which the working-class is organised. On the other hand the Party as such organises workers who are unanimous on a specifically defined programme and on definite tactics. It should

not be confused however that by these two statements we say that the Trade Unions have neither programme nor tactics. They certainly have a much broader though less definite platform. In respect of the relationship between the Communist Party and the Trade Unions it is necessary to make certain facts clear.

We have already explained the attitude adopted by the reformists in respect of politics and also the policy of class-collaboration followed by the Social Democratic and Labour Parties connected with the Trade Union Movement. It is clear that there cannot be anything like "neutrality" or "independence" from politics. The influence of the Social Democratic and Labour Parties, the parties of the reformists, only tends to pervert the unions into weapons of bourgeois policy. On the other hand, because the Trade Unions are broad mass organisations and because the Communist Party is the vanguard of the working-class, its place in the unions is to give the correct lead, direct and assist. Trade Unions must become a field for Communist activity. Ultimately they will become the most important weapon in the class-struggle, making it possible for millions of workers who have not yet arrived at the stage of Communist consciousness to be led by the Communist Party.

The resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International (P 2395) on the role of Communist Parties puts the position quite clearly: "The Communist Party is a part of the working-class, being its most advanced, most class-conscious, and, therefore, its most revolutionary part. The Communist Party is set up by the selection of the best, the most class-conscious, the most self-sacrificing, the more far-sighted workers. The C.P. has no interest differing in anywise from those of the working class. The C.P. is distinguished from the general mass of workers by the fact that it takes stock of the whole historical path trodden by the working-class as a whole and endeavours to defend the interests not only of separate groups not only of separate trades, but the interest of the working class in its entirety, no matter how its path may twist and wind. The C.P. is that organisational political leader by means of which the most progressive part of the working class directs the whole mass of the proletariat and semi-proletariat along the correct path."

How is the C P to fulfil its most important role under the present circumstances? We have tried to contrast the policy of the revolutionary Trade Union Movement as opposed to the reformist, their social theory, functions and aims, relations with the State etc. In dealing with these points, we have made reference to the present world economic crisis and we claim that there cannot be any return to a period of capitalist stabilisation. Rather there must follow a further decay of Capitalism and with this a development in the strength of the revolutionary tide. In India the position is becoming more favourable. Apart from the general attack upon the conditions of the working class, the anti-Imperialist struggle is developing and here and there breaking through the counter-revolutionary framework of the Congress. Under these favourable conditions it is the task of the Communists to build and consolidate an independent revolutionary Trade Union Movement and form and strengthen a revolutionary Trade Union opposition in the national reformist and reformist Trade Unions.

In spite of the limitations of the C P of India this is the task it must set itself and we consider that owing to the continued treachery of the reformist Trade Union leaders, conditions are being created which will facilitate the carrying out of the task. Where the Communist Parties are weak as in India there lie before them unlimited opportunities for the development of the revolutionary Trade Union Movement. Under the circumstances this is the most important channel towards the winning of independent leadership in the class battles, towards the winning of the majority of the working class.

### **Organisation**

The question of the organisational structure of Trade Unions is the most important. The reformist, however, does not appear to be of this opinion. So long as he has some form of organisation to be able to claim to speak on behalf of the workers, he seems satisfied. The structure of organisation, as we find it today, on narrow sectional and local lines, unions organised in individual mills, factories and workshops, railways subdivided and split up



into competing unions, all this provides the greatest weakness to the working-class movement. In this state of organisation the Trade Unions are not able to fulfil their role of being organs for defending the interests of the working class or of leading the attack against the bourgeoisie, and the present state of society. It is our task to see that structure of organisation is placed upon an efficient footing to make the necessary improvement to fit the changing conditions of the struggle, to make the unions more capable of facing up to the attacks of the capitalist class and fulfilling all their tasks in the class struggle.

A lack of centralisation is perhaps one of the weakest features of the Indian Trade Unions and in the main is a result of the policy followed by the reformist leaders. For instance, unions are fostered in individual mills, craft and sectional unions are built. On the railways unions are fostered at particular centres as also are clerk unions, staff unions, workshop unions, linemen's unions and so on. This chaotic state of affairs has been brought about because of the desire of certain individuals to become "Trade Union leaders" and to exploit the movement for personal ends. The result of this has been most detrimental to the working class, and to the great delight of the employers, mutual conflicts, inter-union disputes and the breaking up of strike action have followed.

As against this, our policy is for one Trade Union for one undertaking—industrial unionism. But by this we do not desire to see a bureaucratic form of Trade Unionism brought into being. The distinguishing feature lies in the organisation of the Union organs on the basis of workshops and factory committees with the elective principle and control from below, replacing executives and officials, a general Trade Union centre being the leadership and management of the whole Trade Union Movement of the country.

The factory and workshop committee method of organising the working class has proved to be by far the best. It is for this reason that so much attention was paid by us in the organisation of the G.K.U. to the development of mill committees. It does not necessarily mean that there has got to be a Trade Union before there can be a factory or mill committee. These committees can

be developed irrespective of whether there is a strong Trade Union or a weak Trade Union or even if there is none at all. These factory or mill committees have to carry out functions far beyond the ability of even strong Trade Unions. In fact these factory and workshop committees stand as organs preparing the way to the revolution and will be the means of consolidating its victory as far as industry is concerned. Their basic function being workers' control, for us, therefore, they have tremendous revolutionary importance.

The factory, mill and workshop are the best place to approach the workers on a level footing, to break down religious differences and barriers to expose the reformists and Social Democrats and to hammer out a single militant platform for conducting the struggle for the immediate demands of the working class. Unity of the working class can only be brought about provided we destroy the imaginary barriers that divide them. This can be best done at their place of work. The unity that we have so often spoken about is this—unity from below.

The immense importance of factory, mill, workshop and pit committees has been aptly summarised by Comrade Lozovsky in his book "The World Trade Union Movement"

'(1) The factory and workshop committees are the special organs of class unity during the epoch of social revolution,

(2) That they have as their task the bringing nearer of the working class masses to industry, and the formation of cadres necessary for running industry,

(3) They are the sole basis on which to reorganise the Trade Union Movement on the industrial principle,

(4) The development of the factory committees means a transition from the craft and sectional Trade Union Movement to the highest form of Trade Union organisation—Industrial unionism,

(5) The factory committees are the primary organs for the control of workers over industry, and after the social revolution the basic socialist organisation of national economy,

(6) Further experience has shown that the growth of the factory committees' influence and importance is in proportion to the

growth and development of the social contradictions and social struggle, that the ebb and flow of the wave of revolution makes for an ebb and flow in the factory and workshop committee movement "

Therefore, it is one of the most important tasks of the Party to create factory and workshop committees, and in this respect strike movement furnishes real prerequisite conditions for their formation. Strike committees elected by the workers should be utilised to this end to form the basis of such committees.

The Indian Trade Union Movement has made more than one (Nagpur and Calcutta) attempt to throw off the reformists and reformist nationalist leadership, Joshi, Chaman Lal, Giri, Bose, Ruikar and others. This bourgeois nationalist leadership had been responsible for systematically sidetracking and sabotaging the class struggle and preventing independent political action. They are pledged to class collaboration and support of compromise with British Imperialism, on the basis of the Indian bourgeoisie's participation as a junior partner (Joshi and Giri on the R T C ). Their tactics of sabotaging strikes by methods of localising and splitting (B N R 1927, S I R 1928, etc ) have been fully dealt with elsewhere. Their supply of blacklegs from their Unions to defeat the 1929 G T P Railway Strike and on other occasions are well known.

Every opportunity must be used to expose their treacherous character to the working class and a more determined effort must be made to remove this leadership altogether. From the year 1928 onwards the Trade Union Movement has faced a period of decline and as a result the Trade Union organisation has suffered a severe setback, and has gone back almost to the position that it stood in in 1926. Therefore at present the existing Trade Unions are structurally incapable of directing any broad class struggle. Therefore the main task confronting the Party apart from that of building factory and workshop committees which we have already dealt with, is to reorganise the existing Trade Unions and to extend the Trade Union Movement.

The Unions which exist the Party must work in and develop its fractions. In the main the workers in the key industries are either completely unorganised or badly organised. The concrete tasks

for the extension and reorganisation of the Trade Unions are laid down in the Draft Platform

"In order to organise the widest masses of the working class to defend the day-to-day interests of the workers and to maintain the general revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses of our country The Communist Party of India calls upon all class conscious workers to concentrate every effort on the creation of a revolutionary Trade Union Movement The C P of India deems it essential to organise mass Trade Unions based on factory committees, with the leadership elected directly by the workers and consisting of advanced revolutionary workers The Trade Unions must become regularly functioning mass organisations working in the spirit of the class struggle '

'At the same time the C P of India works for the transformation of the A I T U C into fighting all-India centre of the Labour Movement on a class basis

'If this is carried out and the workers especially in the key industries (metal trades, textile, mining, etc ) are organised in their industrial Unions, and the Transport Workers, Railwaymen, Seamen, Dock Workers, etc are organised in their respective Trade Unions, and Trade Unions of plantation and agricultural workers are organised the Indian Trade Union Movement will then be capable of fulfilling its important role in the class-struggle '

### **The Condition of the Working Class**

Having stated abstractly the Communist policy in relation to the Trade Union Movement, in contrast to the reformist policy it is necessary to recall briefly the main facts as to the application of these two policies in the Indian Movement Any consideration of these facts will show clearly that the policy of the reformists who had unquestioned leadership of the movement for full ten years in spite of the instinctive militancy of the rank and file—was wholly ineffective to improve the position of the workers Our policy has had relatively little chance of being put into practice but during its short career it has shown concrete results and a promise to the workers of advancement and a better life, such as reformism has

been quite unable to do. But capital and the Imperialist Government have interfered. They cannot tolerate a workers' movement which seriously sets about raising the workers' standards. They have passed new punitive and repressive legislation, arrested leaders, batoned and shot the rank and file, and contrived for the time to crush the militant unions. But this situation cannot last. The movement must advance again assisted by the experience of the past; and the one great lesson which this experience teaches us is that the theoretical views which, it was our habit to discuss incidentally in the course of our Trade Union work, are correct, and are indeed the essential truth of the situation; that is, that there is no hope for the workers under the rule of capital, and the fundamental task of the workers' movement is to overthrow Capitalism. The next advance of the militant Trade Union Movement will be made with a much firmer consciousness of this truth.

Before any account of the Trade Union Movement can be understood, it is necessary to have an idea of the basis upon which the movement rises, the material conditions of life and work of the workers, and the attitude adopted towards them by the employers and by the State. It is proposed to give now only a very short account of the position as it has been dealt with in some detail in previous statements, though the facts in themselves are so important and so disgraceful, that it would be impossible to repeat them too often or to say too much about them.

The following table gives a very interesting and striking comparison between the rates of wages paid to workers, working in the same industries and trades, in Great Britain and India.

The figures representing the rates of wages of the various classes of workers in Great Britain are contained in a reply given by the Minister of Labour to a question asked in the House of Commons (Hansard, Monday 24th Nov. 1930, page 907). These rates of wages are for July 1930.

The only exception is that of rates of wages for weavers and spinners (cotton industry). The rates of wages for these workers are taken from the "Memorandum on the Cotton Industry" (p. 48) published by the United Textile Factory Workers' Association,

Great Britain, and represent the average money earnings for workers in that particular branch of the industry.

To make the comparison easy, in all cases, the wages of the workers which are on a weekly basis have been transferred to a monthly basis, and money value to Rupee basis.

The figures of the rates of wages for the workers in the various industries in India are taken from the Report made by A.A. Purcell. M.P. and J. Hallsworth, T.U.C. Delegation to India 1927-28. Again, where necessary, the figures are put on a monthly basis and money transferred to Rupees. In the case of the Indian weavers and spinners (cotton) the figures are taken from a report compiled by the Labour Office, Government of Bombay (pp 9 and 20). The report was compiled in July 1928 and represents the average monthly earnings the figures being taken from 19 representative cotton mills in Bombay City.

Industry and Occupation	Rates of Wages	
	Great Britain	India
Weavers (Cotton)	Rs. 94 00 p.m.	Rs. 49 9 11 p.m. (Bombay)
Spinners (Cotton)	Rs. 94 20 p.m.	Rs. 27 9 11 p.m. (Bombay)
Bricklayers	Rs. 195 10 p.m.	Rs. 65 3 0 p.m. (P. & H p 37)
Bricklayers' Labourer	Rs. 144 00 p.m.	Rs. 13 1 0 p.m. (P. & H p 37)
Engineer Fitter (London)	Rs. 167 90 p.m.	Rs. 47 4 0 p.m. (P. & H p 33)
Engineers' Labourer (London)	Rs. 120 9 0 p.m.	Rs. 22 8 0 p.m. (P. & H p 38)
Tramway Service (Drivers)	Rs. 182 8 0 p.m.	Rs. 26 0 0 p.m. (P. & H p 39)
Hand Compositors (London)	Rs. 234 0 0 p.m.	Rs. 18 4 0 p.m. (P. & H p 39)
Machine Minder (Printing)	Rs. 278 8 0 p.m.	Rs. 38 1 0 p.m. (P. & H p 39)

Industry and Occupation	Rates of Wages	
	Great Britain	India
Bookbinders and Machine Rulers	Rs 213 4 0 p m	Rs 46 2 0 p m (P & H p 39)
Railways (Engine Drivers)	Rs 192 0 0 to 226 0 0 p m	Rs 45 0 0 to 78 4 0 p m and higher grades are re- served for Europeans and Anglo-Indians
Railways (Ticket Collectors)		
A Grade	Rs 154 8 0 p m	Rs 53 4 0 p m
B Grade	Rs 144 0 0 p m	Rs 29 0 0 p m higher grades are reserved for Europeans and Anglo-Indians (P & H p 21)
Mercantile Marine (Seamen)	Rs 120 0 0 p m (Under decisions of the National Maritime Board)	Rs 26 8 0 p m (P & H p 41)

When considering the above table it should be understood that the hours of labour are not the same for the workers in India and Great Britain. To earn the meagre wages shown above for the Indian workers, they, in the most cases, have to work a 60-hour a week. In Great Britain, to earn the wages shown above, the workers there work between 44 and 48 hours a week.

In the case of Railway workers in Great Britain they have a 48-hour week, this is not so in India. Today in Great Britain there is an attempt on the part of the employers to level down the wages of the workers in all the above trades. The Indian workers are being used as a lever to this end. This is what we have to fight against. The wages of the Indian workers have got to be levelled up.

It will be seen that in only one case is the English wage less than twice the Indian wage. This is the case of cotton weavers and there the wage paid by the notoriously depressed Lancashire industry is compared with the wage of a relatively privileged section of the Bombay mill-workers, the most advanced of the Textile workers in the country. In no other case is the Indian wage more than one-third of the corresponding English wage and in some cases it is less than one-tenth. Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth say that it takes in most cases 6 to 8 Indian workers to obtain as much wages as one of the lower-paid workers in Great Britain.

In addition a good deal of other information is available which allows it to be seen that Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth are quite justified in concluding that the average wage of Indian workers generally is not more than one shilling per day (say Rs. 20 per month). Anybody who knows Indian conditions will agree with this conclusion. The wages of the more skilled workers in the main organised industries (except the jute industry) are of course higher. But even these industries and the railways employ large numbers of unskilled men at wages round about Rs. 15/ per month, while the great mass of workers in the smaller and less organised industries, the plantation workers, dock and other town transport workers, the miners and the municipal workers etc etc are almost all paid less than Rs. 20—may considerably less. In a certain proportion of cases, the wages of a man will be supplemented by those of his wife (and even of his children) usually, of course, in the same occupation. The wages of women are in all cases substantially lower than those of men and cannot suffice to alter the position very much. But, of course, their effect is worse than appears at first sight. In many occupations in which the wives of men are employed on a considerable scale the wages of both tend to sink until their sum approaches the average Rs. 20 level. A concrete case is that of Calcutta Municipal sweepers. There this argument was actually used against any increase in their wages (of Rs. 12 or 14 for men, Rs. 10 or 12 for women). This obviously applies to the coal mines also, where it is usual for a man and wife to work together. The Jharia Colliery Employees Association says that a man and wife can seldom earn more than Rs. 20 per month. The same is obviously true of the tea garden workers.



This circumstance then, apart from whatever else may be said about it, does not materially alter the general truth that the income of a working-class family in India is not on the average more than Rs. 20/- per month.

This rate of payment as an average can only be described as monstrous. It may be said that the comparison with English wages is misleading, as English wages are high. That is so, though they are not as high as in some other countries, notably the U.S.A. But if wages are taken in Europe generally they will be found to be at any rate comparable with English wages. Probably in no European country, even the most backward, are wages less than 50 per cent of the English level. But Indian wages are only 10 to 20 per cent of the English level.

Wages in all colonial and backward countries of course tend to be far lower than in Europe. But it seems that Indian wages are low even compared with the usual colonial rates. Rai Sahib Chandrika Prasad's statement may be recalled, which shows that of all railway systems in the world, the Indian has the distinction of employing workers at the lowest pay, (Rs. 9 per month). (It also shows incidentally that the highest pay to a railway servant in the world is in India—Rs. 4,000 per month.) The lowest paid employee on the railway in China, another colonial country, gets 320 dollars per annum, i.e. about Rs. 35 per month. Textile wages in China, however, are said to be about level with those of India, though in Japan, a notorious country for sweated labour, they are higher. Indian labourers are welcomed in Malaya, Burma and the East Indies, on account of their cheapness. It is probably true to say that of all countries in the world (except the colonies of equatorial Africa, where slave conditions exist) and certainly of all countries with a developed industry, India is the country in which the workers are paid the least.

This scandalous state of things has not escaped the attention of the European Labour Movement, which has seen in it a source of danger to its own standards. All the numerous Labour delegations to India in recent years have stressed the necessity of raising the wages of the Indian workers. Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth gave as their parting advice to the Indian Unions to leave aside all the petty questions of grievances etc. which occupy so much of their

time, and concentrate on a big united drive to double and treble the wages of all the workers in India. With whatever motive it was given, it was admirable advice. We, however, were far more modest in our programme. We merely put forward the demand for—no further reduction in wages—and floating in the background a purely theoretical demand for a universal minimum of Rs. 30 per month. But these demands were enough to upset the employers so much that we had to be put in jail, where Messrs Purcell's and Hallsworth's friends of the Labour Party kept us for over two years.

If the position in regard to wages is a disgrace the other conditions of work—hours, holidays, punishment etc. etc. which are hardly less important from the point of view of the workers' standard of life and culture—are in no way better. There is indeed a statutory limitation of hours of work, but it applies only in British India, only to factories (not for example to ships, railways, mines, docks, plantations) and imposes a maximum of eleven hours on the day and 60 hours per week. Even these liberal provisions used to be ignored by the jute mill-owners, for example, in the days of prosperity when they wished to increase production. Under the double shift system, which rendered evasion easy and with inadequate inspection they could sweat their workers for even longer hours than these, of course, without extra pay. In unregulated occupations the position is scandalous. There is a good deal of material on the record which has been summarised in a previous statement, showing the existence of almost incredible conditions in regard to hours of work over a wide variety of occupations. The worst sufferers—speaking of workers—in plantations, docks, port trusts and railways, and clerical occupations of all sorts are notoriously bad in this respect. 12 or 16 hours per day are regularly spoken of. The Whitley Commission has described the same state of affairs in small industries such as tanning and carpet making. Not only are very long hours worked at a time, but this goes on continuously. Very large numbers of workers work seven days a week, and there is usually no provision for holidays. No doubt, workers do take days and even longer periods off from time to time, but doing so involves a risk of dismissal and in any case loss of pay. Unauthorised absence is often punished as in some Bombay cotton mills by deduction of 2 days' pay for each day's absence.

The record contains some material which goes to show the bad conditions in the factories and places of work. The mines are perhaps the worst case. Mr. Mardy Jones has written very strongly on the absence of adequate provisions against accidents in mines, the suspicion of deception by the mine-owners and the insufficient inspecting staff. But apart from accidents the conditions of work are extremely and unnecessarily unhealthy, especially for women. From places of work of all sorts also come complaints of inadequate ventilation, no water supply, no clean place for meals, no sanitary arrangements etc. etc. Conditions in this respect vary considerably as the Whitley Commission points out, and are naturally worse in the more backward local industries, but we know from our own experience that things are often very bad even in the most up-to-date mills.

The conditions of employment of women and children are a long-standing scandal, but in spite of a certain amount of legislation it cannot be said that the position is very much improved. Agitation for the discontinuance of the employment of women in the mines dates from about 1900 but there are still many thousands employed and it will not cease according to the latest arrangements, until 1939. Messrs. Johnstone and Sime condemned especially the conditions of employment of women in the jute mills and so far as we know things have not improved there at all. Children under 9 are now not allowed to work in establishments covered by the Factory Acts. But in other occupations, which probably employ as many workers in all, they can still be engaged as early as the employers think fit. Children begin work in the tea gardens from four years (Whitley Commission Report) and boys of six are employed in the dirty and dangerous work of the Conservancy Department in Calcutta. Mr. Brailsford gives cases which he observed, of boys of ten working for 12 hours a day, 365 days a year, in the extremely filthy and unhealthy conditions of a tanning factory near Bombay, and sleeping and eating in rough sheds on the premises; and of boys from six upwards working, again a 12 hours day, without a break for meals or any other requirement, in glass factories in U.P. Outside the actual time and place of work conditions are no better.

Housing conditions are notorious all over India and have been condemned in the strongest terms by all who have examined the matter. Education and other requirements, and amenities apart from toddy shops are hopelessly poor and meagre. It is not without some justification (from its reformist point of view) that the Whitley Commission lays more stress on the need for improvement in housing and health measures than on any other aspect of the question.

The methods of engagement and dismissal of labour are one of the commonest and acutest sources of sufferings to the workers. In order to save trouble and in order to keep the workers divided, intimidated and closely supervised, many firms—probably the majority—engage their workers through jobbers or sardars who usually get the workers into their debt and otherwise use their position to exploit and oppress the men mercilessly. Between the jobbers and the employers other agencies sometimes establish themselves, so that in some cases there are no fewer than four strata of exploiters living at the expense of the actual workers. In the case of the seamen especially, where the sarangs work in league with the lodging house-keepers on shore, the system is extremely oppressive. In spite of ten years of agitation by the Seamen's Unions, however, nothing substantial has been done to remedy it.

In any case, whether the jobber system is used or not the engagement and dismissal of workers is productive of much exploitation and oppression. Bribery to get jobs is almost universal. Employers and foremen use their position and the threat of dismissal to get further exactions and services from workers. The power of dismissal is used in an arbitrary way, especially of course, against rebellious men. A man who for any reason loses his work is in a pitiable position. In a few cases, employers assist unemployed workers to get back their villages, where there is perhaps a slightly better chance of escaping starvation or crime. But these are the minority. For the great bulk of unemployed workers there is no provision at all.

Communists are often accused of over-emphasising the importance of individual and class economic motives in

determining the actions of men, and of exaggerating the intensity of class antagonism. The facts of the situation in India, briefly sketched here, show that there is little room for exaggeration. The employing class, broadly and as a whole, acts in relation to its workers precisely as its immediate short-range economic interests dictate. It pays them the minimum required to induce them to accept work and to keep them alive, never, of course, making the slightest pretence of consulting the workers about it, it makes the minimum of provision for their housing and other needs; it mercilessly drags into work even children of the youngest age at which they can be employed economically; it neglects to make even the most obvious and easy provisions for the convenience and comfort of workers at work—provisions which would in many cases, pay for themselves in increased efficiency. The employing class shows itself extremely selfish and with hardly a trace of enlightenment about its self-interest.

But further than that, it is not merely passively selfish and negligent of the workers' welfare. Where its interests demand it, it actively oppresses and persecutes the workers, taking all sorts of precautions that the workers shall be entirely passive and helpless victims of its exploitation. Before there is any hint of resistance or rebellion by the workers, barbarous systems of indenture and onerous terms of engagement are instituted, amounting in some cases almost to slavery. The tea gardens are of course the most notorious and biggest case. The Whitley Commission takes much pains to whitewash the tea companies, but in view of the recurrent agitation on the question for years past and especially the vigorous criticism of Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth and the replies it called forth from the companies, nobody can be satisfied that the Whitley Commission has given an objective account. Even as it is, its admissions are damaging. Further, elaborate systems of punishments and fines are set up. Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth remark that "in the wages field there is a veritable maze of excisions, deductions and forfeitures." The workers are systematically bullied and physically maltreated. They are fined and dismissed arbitrarily. They are entangled in debt by means of the system of bribes to get jobs and by delayed payments. The

employers, in some cases at least, encourage the establishment of toddy shops for their workers, as drink is one of the best means of preventing discontent. If in spite of, or because of, all this the workers show signs of resistance, they are dealt with ruthlessly. Leaders among the workers are systematically victimised. Disputes on communal or other grounds (several cases mentioned in the records have been cited in previous statements) are worked up among them. Full advantage is taken of the circumstance that the employers may have provided the workers' houses or may own the land on which workers' houses are built. In this case they threaten, and carry into effect, expulsion from the houses in case of dispute, or use their legal rights in the matters, to isolate the workers from outside contacts and to cut off their water supply. (Several cases of this have occurred in our experience.) Finally they call in the police and civil authorities, who are always willing to help them, to break the workers' resistance by any means from prosecuting them on false charges to shooting them.

It cannot be said that in most of these matters there is any great difference between the Indian and the British employers. The British employers often claim to be more advanced than the Indian. It is true that worse conditions can be found in some of the smaller and more backward industries under Indian capital than can be found in any British concern. But these are relics of mediaevalism. In up-to-date industries it cannot be maintained that there is any advantage. From the workers' point of view the Indian-owned cotton mills of Bombay compare favourably in almost all respects with the mainly British-managed Jute Mills of Bengal. The wages are definitely higher, and other conditions are no more onerous, though for many years the jute industry has been far more prosperous than the cotton industry. Both inside and outside the mills the Bombay workers have more freedom of organisation than the Bengal workers, though conditions have become far worse in both cases in the last few years. It is still possible for the Bombay workers to organise openly, while in the jute area in Bengal the labour movement is for practical purposes illegal. The Indian mill-owners have not yet developed the industrial spy system while such a system has been working in

close contact with the police for some time in Bengal. On the other hand in regard to methods of corrupting the workers by "welfare work" and the like, some of the more intelligent Indian employers as at Nagpur have done probably more than any European firm. Further the infamous enslavement and exploitation carried out on huge numbers of workers from the very beginning of the tea industry, must be put down almost entirely to the account of the European employers, who started the industry and are still mainly responsible for its management.

Such being the record of the employers the record of the State towards labour is what is to be expected. A Marxist, in fact, could not wish for a clearer example than is provided by India of the truth of his favourite "dogma" that the State acts as the instrument of oppression of the ruling class against the enslaved classes. No worker can vote, either for provincial or for national representatives. A small stratum enjoys the vote in a new municipalities. Even after the Congress has pretended to demand universal suffrage, there is no indication that the franchise will be extended beyond 25 per cent of the population at the most—which would leave the workers still practically without any voting strength. The Government do not seem to favour the proposal for separate labour electorates, which in spite of its suspicious origin and generally objectionable character might conceivably be made use of by the workers for their own benefit. The Government are far more interested in the mainly artificial and ultimately reactionary "depressed classes" movement, and in giving them a separate electorate. Labour "representation" has been in the past, and apparently will be in the future by nomination. Under this system the Government appoint persons who have some knowledge of the labour movement to sit in the councils or the Assembly. The total number thus appointed has been in the past very small (eleven in all); the Government have sometimes, but sometimes not, accepted the recommendations of the Trade Unions in regard to the personnel of the appointments, who have been anything from respectable hard-working reformist to police agents and swindlers, and the representatives thus appointed have, as nominated members, had very little influence and have usually

done what they have been expected to do namely support the Government on all occasions. In regard to the legislative provisions made by the Government hitherto for the protection of the workers, the short survey of labour conditions just given is really a sufficient indication. The position is satisfactory, or up to the usual standards of industrial countries, in no respect. The actual number of Acts passed is small, and most of them are of little importance and affect very few workers. Of the important items of legislation, that on hours of work limits the hours to eleven per day and 60 per week, as opposed to 8 and 48 respectively of the Washington Hours Convention, it applies only to factories and only of British-India. (It is worthwhile to notice too that even this Act was passed only in response to united demands from Lancashire and Bombay. The former wanted protection from Indian competition, the latter, which was working a relatively short day, wanted protection from up-country competition.) Children are not allowed to work in factories under nine years, as opposed to twelve in England. There are limitations on the employment of young persons at night, but they apply to industries not to other occupation. The long delayed legislation on the employment of women in underground mines is so unsatisfactory as to be condemned by Mr. Mardy Jones as an instance of Government's complicity with capitalist rapacity. The Government have adopted an I. L. O. Convention in regard to unemployment, which, however, does nothing for the unemployed, and has appointed a Seamen's Recruitment Committee in 1922 to deal with the scandals already mentioned in connection with the engagement of the seamen, but has not acted on the report of the Committee and has done nothing further in the matter. This is a practically complete record of the Government of India's labour legislation.

The Government have been very slow and timid in passing any legislation for the benefit of labour. But in measures against the workers it has shown what is, for Government, a truly remarkable promptitude and thoroughness. The employer's agitation against the Militant Labour Movement began in the summer of 1928. Already by September, Government had come forward with the



Public Safety Bill, and two months latter with the Trade Disputes Bill both of which became law early in the following year. Shortly afterwards the Bombay Government passed the Bombay Prevention of Intimidation Act. There is no need to go into the nature of these measures now. They were recognised immediately by everybody as class war legislation of the most drastic type.

In other ways too, the Government rallied vigorously to the side of a rather panic-stricken Capitalism. Its own officials, the Viceroy included, joined in the propaganda campaign. It launched a whole series of prosecutions of labour leaders and organisers, of which this case is one. It set an example of the most unbending sternness and vindictiveness in its relations with its own employees as in the E.I.R. and S.I.R. strikes of 1928. And it exceeded all even of its own precedents in the severity of its administrative measures against the Labour Movement. If there had ever been any room for doubt, there could no longer, after 1928, be any question as to which class controlled the State in India.

It has always been the practice for the Government machinery in India to treat labour very severely. Mr. N. M. Joshi has complained of C.I.D. espionage upon him and the evident suspicion of the police towards him. Shooting upon the workers while on strike has also been a constant occurrence since the earliest days of the Labour Movement. Labour organisation in India has always been a difficult and dangerous matter. But since 1928 what little freedom of organisation and assembly there was for the workers has very largely gone. The employers have taken the initiative and the State has enthusiastically supported them. The panic on the labour question which prevailed in 1928-29 has died down and public attention has been mainly occupied by other things. But the administrative system and methods established for crushing the Labour Movement in those years have continued in operation with undiminished rigour. With the help of the police the employers have sacked all men who have become at all prominent in Union work, taking advantage of the trade depression. The espionage system upon the workers is now well developed, so that any movement of resistance can be crushed from the beginning. If discontent grows so that strike and other action seems likely,

S 144 is brought into operation, and meetings are prevented by armed police and troops. The present methods are not so spectacular as those of a few years ago, but are more effective. It was coming to be a scandal that no strike of any size could take place without shooting by the police or troops, and the murder of a number of strikers. The police and troops are still used—in fact more than ever. But they are on the spot in time and by their help strikes are so scientifically smothered from the start that the old crude methods are usually not needed.

### **The Indian Trade Union Movement**

In the situation which has just been described—of miserable pay and disgustingly bad conditions of all sorts—a vigorous movement of protest by the workers is not a surprising development. It is natural also in conditions of general ignorance and of systematic oppression and intimidation by the employers and the State, that the Movement while it remained in the workers' own hands should be lacking in permanence and should have achieved relatively little. This was the case up till the war time. The movement before 1914 was intermittent and scattered and attracted the attention of few people outside those immediately concerned, so that except for some sections of the more educated workers no permanent organisations were set up. The war changed the situation radically. A considerable growth of industry took place and conditions of all workers were sharply and simultaneously worsened by the rapid rise in the cost of living. The movement of protest by the workers grew correspondingly in extent and vigour, so much so that it attracted widespread attention from outside, and more or less permanent organisations were established on a far larger scale than before. The beginning of the Trade Union Movement is accordingly put at 1917 and 1918 when this process became well developed. From its beginning the movement has depended on the leadership of outsiders. It is historically the fact that practically no permanent organisation had been set up by the workers themselves before the outsiders came in, and possibly their claim is justified, that no such organisation could have been set up by the workers alone at that time. The

situation, however, was such that leadership was of relatively little importance. The discontent of the workers was widespread and deep, and their claims for advances overwhelming, while at the same time the employers were in general prosperous and could afford concessions without difficulty. Advances in consequence were obtained in a considerable number of cases, and without excessive opposition. The outside leaders were able to take advantage of this position to negotiate such advances, and by this means, and through their services in stabilising organisations etc., they were able to establish themselves as the recognised leaders of the movement.

They were accepted by the workers. But they were also necessary to the employers. Capitalism in India had had no experience previously in dealing with labour "unrest" on such a large scale, and the traditional methods, of merely suppressing the trouble, were no longer adequate. Accordingly they welcomed or at least tolerated the outside leaders, who, it must be said, were in general such as to recommend themselves very strongly to the capitalist class as leaders of its labour force. We are sometimes accused of exaggeration when we describe that the reformist labour leaders as "agents of Capitalism". We should claim that, considered objectively and from a long-period historical point of view, that description is justified in all cases. But in India there seems to be a more immediate and obvious justification at least in most instances. The principal group of reformist leaders in Bombay is that headed by Mr. Joshi, of the Liberal Federation, the Servants of India Society and the Social Service League. Several others of the Bombay Labour leaders belong to one or other of these bodies, which are supported by some at least of the Bombay mill-owners and other capitalists. Other originally independent Labour leaders in Bombay have in almost all cases come eventually under the influence and effective leadership of Mr. Joshi.

In Madras the group which has established itself as the leader and guide of the Labour Movement for the whole province consists of members of the old Home Rule League, which was before the Non-Co-operation Movement, the principal bourgeois nationalist party in Madras.

In Ahmedabad Mr. Gandhi, pre-eminently the leader of the bourgeois class, himself took on the job with his immediate satellites. The president of the Textile Union at Ahmedabad, who is, of course, a faithful follower of Mr. Gandhi, is a member of a mill-owning family. In these cases there can be no question as to the accuracy of our description. If the employers did not actually appoint these men, at least they could not wish for more suitable persons in their positions. In other cases also, the outsiders have followed the fashion set by these principal pioneer groups, or in other ways contrived to do more or less what the employers require. In Bengal, the outside leaders have been from the beginning more miscellaneous and on the whole even more reactionary, than at the other centres named. Among the first to come forward were a European lawyer from the Calcutta Bar, the late Mr. Braunfield, and a leader of the Anglo-Indian community Dr. H. W. B. Moreno. Later for some time, the Congress under the leadership of the late Mr. C. R. Das took a hand. By 1924 however, Congress interest in the movement died (only to be revived again recently when the national bourgeoisie wanted some mass support for their campaign against the Government). A group of supporters of Mr. Joshi's policy was formed later, but never succeeded in getting complete control of the movement which remained divided into at least three or four shiftings but always contending groups, one led by the notorious Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhri. The differences have been not mainly on questions of policy of principle but of a personal character, and the consequent division and weakness of the movement have no doubt suited the employers admirably.

In other places, similar conditions have prevailed. Various followers of the late Lala Lajpat Rai, a leader of the bourgeoisie of the rather less advanced type, have staked out claims in the Punjab and at Cawnpore. Mr. Andrews held for some years a Roving Commission all over Northern India and Bengal. Mr. Chaman Lal, who, so far as he is anything, is a Congressman and follower of the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, popped in and out of the

movement in a disconcerting manner, but with a uniformly reactionary effect. Mr. Joshi set up groups of followers of his policy at various secondary centres, Sholapur, Indore, Nagpur, Jharia. Kharagpur. After a good beginning the Union at Jamshedpur fell under the joint influence of Mr. Joshi, Mr. Channan Lal and Mr. Andrew, and was eventually taken over on the American model by the Tata Company itself. Various other small groups of workers in U.P., Punjab and elsewhere have from time to time been "organised" by outsiders who have usually been communalists, careerists and reactionaries of an even worse type than those already mentioned. This survey will explain why we have been in the habit of calling outside leaders of Labour "agents of the bourgeoisie", and will show that we have been fully justified. Our description is, in most cases, literally true.

It is worthwhile in this connection to notice some of the few cases in which sections of the workers were able at this early period to set up and run organisation in partial or complete independence of outside leadership. In some cases, they have been exceedingly militant and have shown great organising capacity. But in the absence of long experience of their own, or of any knowledge of the accumulated experience and theory of the Labour Movement, they have been eventually defeated and their organisations either broken or brought under reformist influence. A category of workers which has always been relatively free from outside influence of the ordinary type is the postal workers. The postal organisation was well established years before the general mass of workers began to organise. But it has always been run under the patronage of officials, and has been strongly influenced by the upper grade staff, who have tended to take charge. As a consequence in many places the lower grade staff have split off or formed a separate organisation of their own, which has, however, continued more or less the same traditions, concentrated on running benefit societies and accumulating big funds, sought the favour of officials etc., and consequently has not justified its

separate existence. During the years of rising prices 1917-21, the postal workers suffered severely, and there were a number of strikes of which the Bombay Postal strike in the summer of 1920 is perhaps the most memorable. Other influences however proved eventually too strong in their effect upon State employees and there remained no permanent result. The postal workers, however, are not a typical category, as so large a proportion are clerical workers. Of greater interest is the case of the railwaymen. Here again the clerical and similar grades exercise a good deal of influence usually in the direction of reformism but their weight is not so great as among the postal workers. One of the sections of workers with the longest history of militant struggle is the North Western Railwaymen. They fought successful strikes in the period 1918-20, and were fortunate in enlisting the services of a number of the more educated employees with whose aid a very strong organisation was established all over the line. A large proportion even of the European and Anglo-Indian Staff joined the union, which claimed at one time 85 000 members. The leaders, however, though intelligent and competent men were guided by no principle or knowledge of the Labour Movement and could not stand out against the temptations of their position. The management bought over some leaders, had others victimised and imprisoned, instigated quarrels on communal and personal grounds within the Union, and eventually succeeded in defeating the strike of 1925 and smashing the Union altogether. Since then the principal leaders, now completely corrupted have kept in existence a small union with a few hundreds or thousands of members, and have concentrated on quarrelling with other would be leaders, making pronouncements of loyalty to the management and the Government, giving evidence before the Simon and Whitley Commissions and sabotaging all other efforts at Labour Organisation, whether on the N W R or elsewhere in the Punjab.

The history of the Bengal-Nagpur Railwaymen is also one of militant struggles, but presents new features. In this case the clerical and other higher grades have exerted a much more definite influence in the direction of reformism, in which they have been assisted to some extent by outsiders. At times however the rebelliousness of the lower grades led by the men of the Kharagpur Workshop has prevailed and some stubborn strikes have been fought. At one time in 1927, the tension between the two sections became so great that a complete split took place. The workshop men could not stand alone however and eventually merged into the reformist union again.

The Eastern Bengal Railway supplies a case which is a step further in the same direction. Here the clerical grades, Station-Masters etc. have been in complete control of the union, which they have run themselves with only nominal assistance from outside from the beginning in 1919 to 1920. They have kept the Union practically to themselves and have hardly made any attempt to enrol the lower grade staff or workshopen. Since the N.C.O. period when there was a spontaneous strike over a part of the line the Union has conducted no strike and has successfully prevented an independent move by the lower grades.

This is however an extreme case. The G.I.P. Railway for example presents a distinct contrast. Here the small reformist Union led by Mr S. C. Joshi succeeded in controlling only a small section of the clerical staff in some of the Bombay offices of the Railway. Most of the clerical and other upper grade staff joined the militant Union, and many of them took an active part in organising and conducting propaganda for a militant policy.

Nevertheless it is true that clerical workers will usually be found to exercise an influence in the direction of reformism, to a greater extent at least than other workers. This is the case in other countries also. The reasons are fairly clear. Their economic position is commonly (though not always) better than that of the majority of workers. They are brought by their work into close contact with the officials and management, a certain proportion are of bourgeois origin, and their education has the effect of bringing them under the influence of bourgeois ideas, the popular

classification puts them as educated men into the middle class with which they will therefore tend to identify themselves. The influence of the clerical workers and similar grades is probably in India the principal reason for the tendency, at times fairly strong, which is to be found within the ranks of the workers themselves towards reformism.

As for the reformist influence of outside leadership, it hardly needs explanation, in view of what has already been said about these leaders. But the employers and especially the Government do not leave things to chance, and the natural inclinations of the outsiders. They are encouraged by all means to show themselves "a good influence on the side of moderation" and are severely discouraged from developing any tendency towards militancy.

As Mr Joshi and Mr Kirk have testified even the most respectable Labour leaders are subjected to close and continuous surveillance by the C.I.D.—which is itself a gentle reminder that worse things may follow. Any who are indiscreet enough to go further than the Police approve of are apt to be inconvenienced in various ways—they may suddenly lose their employment, or find their nomination to the Municipal or Legislative Council is not accepted.

On the other hand, there are rewards for those who keep to the straight path of reformism. It is never a bad thing for one's worldly prospects to be known as a public man and to be on good terms with the local employers and officials, and for the more ambitious there are appointments to Municipal and Legislative Councils or even the Assembly, Courts of Inquiry or Arbitration, Royal Commissions, Round Table Conferences, International Labour Conferences, and any number of other prizes.

It is notorious that the Labour Movement is influenced by these things, but the extent of the influence is perhaps not realised. The very formation of the A.I.T.U.C. in 1920 was due principally to the need felt for a body which could make recommendations in the name of Labour for the delegation to the Washington International Labour Conference. The perpetual quarrels among Labour organisers especially in Bengal and Punjab, which have



had a very adverse influence on the movement, are to be attributed largely to competition for rewards of this sort. The effect has not only been to foment internal rivalries but to promote certain types of organisation, needless to say, bad types—for the purpose of advancing their leaders' interests. The very harmful and demoralising practice of founding large numbers of small or bogus "Unions" under the leadership of one person or group, is the most obvious instance. It is not solely due to this reason, but has been mainly promoted by it. This cause is also responsible for the opposite but equally fatal error, sometimes to be seen, of organising all the workers of whatever occupation in a given town into one local union—for the glorification of the local leader. Local unity is desirable, in fact essential, but to organise all workers into one union is to carry the principle too far, to produce, probably inefficiency, and inevitably isolation from the national movement.

But all these personal or organisational effects of outside leadership supplemented by pressure from the employers and the Government, are of minor importance. It is more correct perhaps to say that they are aspects only of the essential important effect which this influence has had upon the Labour Movement, namely to subject it to reformism.

This pressure by the Government and the bourgeoisie upon the Labour Movement began to be exercised from the very beginning, when the movement began to take on mass proportions in 1917-18. It was more or less successful in getting at least the nominal leadership into the hands of its men, the middle class Labour leaders, but this circumstance did not have a great influence on the movement for some years. While the industrial boom was maintained and prices continued to rise and even later, roughly until 1922, the mass movement could not be brought under control. When the industrial boom collapsed however, the new conditions made themselves felt and brought to an end the first phase of the Indian Labour Movement. Business contracted, prices became stable and began to fall again, unemployment increased, the employers put up an even stiffer resistance to the workers demands and began in their turn to demands cuts; and the

chaotic mass movement began to lose its strength and was brought to a stop. The new conditions of the second phase of the movement exposed the useless character of the outside leaders, but at the same time provided them with their opportunity to stabilise their position and policy in the movement. It exposed them by showing that they had been unable to organise the movement effectively to withstand the new period of adversity and capitalist offensive. Most of the leaders had actually very little idea of how organisations should be conducted. They had not instituted proper registration of members, collections of funds, organisation of local branches, election of committees etc. etc. In many cases in consequence the Unions which had been formed in the boom period soon ceased to exist altogether, while in all cases they were greatly reduced in size and influence.

Where however the leaders were able in spite of their short comings to keep their positions, they found the new conditions more favourable for their purposes. The militant enthusiasm of the earlier years was damped by adversity. In the absence of any proper instruction in the ideas and history of the Labour Movement even the most active workers tended to lose heart. All that was left in most cases of the big mass unions of the earlier period, was small groups on which it was relatively easy to impose the local isolation and the limited and sectional aims which reformism delights in. The actual spirit of reformism could be inculcated into the workers, while of course the personal ascendancy of the leaders could be made secure.

This account of the general course of events is correct as is shown by the general figures for these years of numbers and membership of unions and of disputes, and by the histories of the individual unions. Even the Ahmedabad Textile Union, which the outside leaders had organised far more carefully than elsewhere shows the general trend. The total number of textile workers at Ahmedabad is about 50,000, and at its highest point about 1922 the Union had a strength of about 35,000 members. The employers' offensive came in 1923 when they demanded a 20 per cent reduction of wages. The workers struck but the strike was fought half-heartedly and the leaders agreed after two months to a

cut of 15½ per cent. Shortly afterwards, in 1925, owing to the prolonged strike of the Bombay Textile Workers the excise duty on cotton was removed by Government and the Bombay mill-owners agreed in consequence to restore the 11½ per cent cut in wages which they had tried to enforce. It was obviously the moment for the Ahmedabad workers to press for the restoration of their 15½ per cent cut. But the Union made no attempt of the sort, and has not done so to this day. In view of these events and the policy they indicate, it is not surprising that the membership of the Union fell steadily from 35,000 in 1922 to about 11,000 in 1927. The proportion of members retained however is better than in most cases as the Union had been from the beginning more thoroughly organised.

A more extreme case is to be seen in the Bombay Textile Industry, where the workers, owing to their position and concentration and the relatively long standing of the industry, are the most militant and conscious in the country.

Many struggles were fought in the period 1918-22, which gave the workers such a bad impression about the numerous outside labour leaders who took a hand in their affairs, that none of these had any influence by the end of that period. The employers' offensive developed, and was vigorously resisted by the workers, who fought four prolonged general strikes (all defensive) in the six years 1924-1929. After the first of these, in 1924, the reformists rallied and began organising work again, so that after the 1925 strike, in which they assisted in the distribution of relief, they were able to set up a small union. This union however never claimed to have more than 9,000 members, and was completely swept away by the next strike in 1928. Other cases in which the course of organisation and the influence of the reformists followed the general line described above in that period are the Coal Industry, the Madras Cotton Industry, the B.B.C.I., G.I.P. and E.I. Railways, and the Iron and Steel Industry at Jamshedpur.

The A.I.T.U.C. itself also shows the same general course of development, except for the circumstances that in the first few years, it was patronised by the Indian National Congress. The first

session in Bombay in 1920 and more especially the second at Jharia, in 1921, were marked by the presence of a large working class element and the greatest enthusiasm. The session at Jharia was signalled by a big strike in the neighbouring coal mines and the place of meeting was surrounded by police and troops armed with machine-guns. By the time of the third Congress, Lahore, 1923, the retreat had begun and the attendance was entirely middle class. This was more or less the case also at the next Congress in Calcutta 1924, and at the next three Congresses, Bombay 1925, Madras 1926, and Delhi 1927, though the Indian National Congress element had gone, the attendance was almost confined to middle class Labour leaders, the numbers of Union and workers represented were at a minimum and the proceedings were of the most formal and useless nature. No programmes were put before the workers or plans made for organisation or action; the resolutions passed consisted entirely of stereo-typed appeals to the Government for legislation and inquiry.

Such was the second phase in the growth of the Indian Trade Union Movement—the period of the triumph of the middle class reformist leadership, and the period of the lowest ebb in working class activity. A number of important struggles by sections of the workers took place during this time, though not as many as in the preceding or the subsequent period, but these strikes were fought by the workers alone, almost independent of the Trade Union Movement, which went on its peaceful way undisturbed by them. This period may be said to have shown the bankruptcy of reformism as completely as is possible. Before the capitalist attack on the workers' standards, it did not merely fail to put up an effective resistance, it did not even try.

A new period may be said to date from about 1927, marked by much greater activity on the part of the workers in resisting the continued attacks of the employers, but also by a distinct growth in the consciousness of the workers as to the importance of their struggle and the possibility and necessity of independent class action on their part. The trade depression had continued without any notable change from 1922-26, to be somewhat intensified in 1927 and 1928 as a result of the alteration in the exchange ratio of

the rupee in 1926. As a consequence of this and of developments in other industrial countries the employers began a movement for rationalisation which began to be noticeable in 1926-27. This was the most important cause of the new movement among the workers. They were also however affected to some extent by the new wave of political activity which began to rise in the country at that time which was stimulated by the ratio question, the Simon Commission agitation etc. etc. That this movement influenced the workers to some extent is shown by the great response they made to the movement against the Simon Commission. But these circumstances alone do not suffice to account for the movement. During the preceding years of stagnation there had been a slow accumulation of discontent among the workers and also a slow penetration among them of new ideas. The conception of class-struggle and of the opposition of interests between themselves and the upper classes was becoming clearer, and perhaps also some ideas of socialism and of the work of the Soviet Union were spreading. This is shown by the eagerness with which new political ideas were taken up by the workers, when we ourselves among others began to put them forward by the immediate and widespread popularity of May Day which began to be celebrated in 1926 and 1927 and by the fact that the big outburst of strike activity in 1927-29 was not solely a response to increased pressure from the capitalists, but also partook of the nature of a working class offensive.

The beginnings of this new movement are perhaps to be seen as far back as 1925, when the decline as shown by membership figures etc. may be said to have ceased and a slight rise began. From this time a slow but widespread growth in the Trade Unions took place at first mainly on the old lines and within the system of the old Unions under the reformist leaders. The first definite sign was the beginning of the new policy of rationalisation on the railways, which resulted in the prolonged struggle of the B N R workers in 1926-27. Something of the new working-class outlook which was now developing was to be seen in this series of strikes, in the conscious militancy, especially of the Kharagpur workshop men but it was not sufficiently conscious to succeed

Outside militant leadership capable of giving substantial assistance came on the scene only at the end of 1927, when the workers were already exhausted and the struggle lost. Nonetheless the workers gave a very good account of themselves and staved off for more than a year the defeat which reformist leaders would have accepted at the beginning.

By 1927 it was possible to see clearly that a new wave of working-class activity was rising, and in 1928-29 it showed itself in an almost unprecedented number of strikes in almost all industries. The railwaymen were involved on four important railways, the textile workers in Bombay and at least six other centres, the greater part of the jute workers, the workers at Jamshedpur, and municipal and several other categories of workers at many centres in all parts of the country.

The period of activity continued well into 1929, but at the end of that year a certain exhaustion became apparent. At the same time the trade slump set in. Though this caused the workers heavy loss through unemployment and cuts in wages, those in work were to a certain extent compensated by the fall in price of food-stuffs, and in any case a period of trade depression accompanied by much unemployment is the least favourable time for a fight by the workers. In addition to this the employers and the Government had taken drastic steps to crush the Trade Union Movement, and instituted a severe reign of terror against it. Accordingly by the end of 1929, the wave of activity had practically subsided.

As the record of strikes and membership figures of Unions gives the history of the activity of the period, a survey of the AITUC Sessions will show the corresponding ideological changes. Now in the events in question in the sessions of the AITUC we played a prominent part, we put forward resolutions embodying our policy, and in this way contributed to a certain extent to the change of policy which was gradually brought about in the movement. Because of this the Prosecution have tried to represent not only the events in the TUC Sessions but even the movement in the unions and among the workers in the country as primarily due to some "conspiracy" on our part.

A consideration of the magnitude of the movement will be enough by itself to show that conception is absurd. But not only that. As has been shown already this revival of the workers' movement was already making itself felt and gathering strength well before we were in a position to exert any influence on the course of events. Our contribution was largely in the sphere of ideas—as in the T.U.C. Sessions. But it is true to say that in putting forward our policy we were interpreting the ideas which were forming at that time in the minds of large number of workers. By formulating our policy in this way we not only interpreted and clarified the workers' ideas, we also contributed directly to their formation. In doing this we performed the essential task of leadership. But the events show that we were on the right lines. We interpreted the workers' ideas correctly, and supplied what they wanted. Once the policy we were putting forwards began to get abroad among the workers it received a rapidly increasing measure of support not only in speeches and votes, but in action.

The essential points of the policy which we put forward in the T.U.C. were the conception of the working-class movement as a whole, which should strive to act together in a disciplined way united by the T.U.C., as opposed to the old reformist conception of the T.U.C. as a loose federation with no definite function in the struggle. The same conception we tried also to introduce into the actual struggles of the various sections of workers, as is shown by our proposals for amalgamating overlapping Unions, and the organisation of industrial unions, Trades Councils etc., and by our policy in strikes. We stood always of course for the attitude of struggle by the workers against the employers, as opposed to the reformist tendency to surrender or adopt conciliation if any change presented itself. Finally, we began to introduce our more general ideas of the political nature of the Trade Union struggle, by opposing co-operation with the Government, boycotting Geneva and the Simon Commission etc., by bringing forward the idea of international affiliation with the revolutionary working-class movement, and by discussing general political affairs, such as the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, the prospects of war and the like.

At the Delhi Session of A I T U C , March 1927, which was the first attended by any of us, we were still a small group, which was unable to make itself felt very effectively

Eight months later at the Cawnpore Session, our strength had increased considerably and we were a factor which had to be taken into account. So much was this so that Mr Chaman Lal who presided at this session, felt the influence of the new current of opinion and thought it necessary to take steps against it. He followed the well-known tactics of heading the movement in order to behead it. He gave a very radical Presidential Address, but succeeded in sabotaging or rendering harmless all the steps which we proposed.

A year later at the Jharia Session (December 1928) our position was stronger, though we were still in a minority. On many questions, however, especially those touching the immediate interests of the workers, the tide of feeling was obviously with us, and we were able to carry such points against the convictions if not the votes of the reformist majority. This was the reformists' policy—to act so far as possible as a brake on the workers, but at any cost to keep their positions. If necessary by supporting for the time being policies in which they did not believe. The result was seen at the next session of the A I T U C at Nagpur December 1929. Owing to their long association with the Unions and their tactics, the reformists were still very strong. The militant Left-wing had advanced by this time even farther and in alliance with the group led by the Indian National Congress which had again begun to take an interest in the workers, they had a majority. The reformists, however, would not accept their defeat, and seceded from the T U C. Though now a minority they were still a big majority, and their secession was a very serious blow to the T U C, and this, combined with the continuous repression directed against the Left-wing by the Government and the fact that the wave of militant working-class struggle was now definitely subsiding, soon reduced the T U C to relative impotence.



The outcome at the present moment of this period of Trade Union history is no gain or advance, at any rate of an obvious character. But there can be no doubt that the movement has advanced in consciousness and knowledge. For the time it is defeated and weak, but the next period of advance will show that the experience of the last few years has not been wasted. For the first time the workers have been able to see the reformist policy and the militant revolutionary policy in action together, to compare them and to decide which deserved their support. The reformist policy was exposed even more decisively in this period than it had been before. Outstanding cases are the railways and the Bombay Textile Industry. In the former case the managements, pursuing a united policy attacked the workers on line after line, leaving in the end no important section untouched, and provoking strikes on five different lines in the course of four years. As early as the first of these, the B.N.R. Strike in 1927, it was seen that workers of one railway alone could not hold out and the appeal was made by the Left-Wing for a general railway strike as the only remedy. The appeal failed them, and in the subsequent years the workers of the E.I.R., N.G.S.R., S.I.R., and G.I.P. Railways were successfully provoked to strikes and defeated one by one, while the reformists in control of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation did nothing.

The case of the Bombay Textile Industry was similar. The mill-owners, pursuing a united policy, attacked the workers of mill after mill, defeating them one by one and forcing their new nationalised methods on them. The reformists had no policy but opposed the militant policy of united resistance. The militant policy was put into effect and was successful, at least for the time. The exposure of the reformists was complete, and they have never managed since then to re-establish their position with the Bombay mill-workers.

These are the most outstanding cases. But all over the country, in the strikes which took place in these years, the lesson was to be found, and was learnt, that the reformist policy of submission or at the best, sectional struggle, can lead to nothing but defeat; while the very great obstinacy and prolongation of many of these

strikes showed that the workers were learning also that the policy of united militant struggle if not an infallible means to success at least offers the best chance. In most of these strikes there was no Communist "conspirator" to preach his doctrines. But none the less these doctrines found their way more or less clearly into the minds and into the activities of the workers.

We claim therefore that our policy has justified itself. Where it has been put consciously and competently into practice it has been successful, and even where it has not been consciously held it has developed out of the workers' own experience and has recommended itself to them as the only possible policy for them to follow. We therefore look to the future development of the movement with confidence. For the moment the situation is unfavourable. But just as five years ago the workers began a new phase of activity, which showed that in the previous long period of stagnation they had not been merely vegetating but had assimilated the experience of the past and profited from it, so they will do again. During the 15 years of its existence the T.U. Movement with the least possible encouragement from outside has made a very big advance and it is impossible to believe that advance will not go on.

The most important of the steps which it is necessary to take if the workers' advance is to go on, have been indicated previously. They are the essential policies for which we stood when we were active in the movement, for conditions have not changed so completely as to render that policy obsolete. There must be set up an ever more solid and united organisation of the workers based on the workers' committees in the places of production; the workers' organisations must be resolutely kept independent of the employers' influence or collaboration with the State; and must be freed from the control of reformists; the consciousness of their own class interests, and the policy of united militant struggle must permeate all sections of the workers, and lead on to the final lesson of all, the necessity for the political struggle to supplement the economic one. We stood for this policy, and we should claim that the very fact that we were arrested and have been imprisoned for nearly three years mainly on account of it, is itself evidence

that the policy is correct. But we claim also that it has been already justified by its results. It has proved effective in practice, and has proved to be the policy for which the working-class itself is instinctively striving. It is no artificial policy, imported from abroad and imposed on the movement by external influence, but grows up from the necessity of the situation and the actual experience of the workers themselves. For this reason it cannot be crushed by a repression and putting a few of its exponents in jail. It will continue to grow and will be seen no doubt far more consciously and effectively put into practice. when the working-class begins its next big advance against Capitalism.

## VII. "TACTICS"

It is necessary to explain some points arising from our methods and tactics, so far as they have not been covered by what we have said already

### **Fractions**

First comes the question of our attitude to "wider bodies" such as Trade Unions, the Workers' and Peasants' Party, the Indian National Congress, elected legislatures, etc. The Prosecution in accordance with its usual Bolshevik-phobia has done its best to represent our formation of "fraction" "nuclei" etc as a peculiarly Machiavellian underhand proceeding.

This reproach is at first sight rather difficult to understand. In fact we are often charged with being unnecessarily frank and open about our fraction work. We habitually discuss it publicly in our journals etc. Actually both these opposite charges arise from the same weakness in the position of our opponents. The bourgeoisie and the reformists both habitually conduct fraction work in the same way as we do. But we can always afford to be honest about it, and they usually cannot.

The bourgeois and reformist parties, the State, and other interests, systematically form fractions in such bodies as Trade Unions. We have referred to the Liberal Trade Union League in Great Britain, and to the fraction of the Indian bourgeoisie in the

Indian Unions We have also cited a case of what we conclude is the fraction work of the State itself in the Trade Union Movement Mr K C Roy Choudhri and his associates presume on the ignorance of the workers and to some extent on the sectional exploiting interest of the "Sardars" in the jute industry to conduct a definitely strike-breaking, Loyalist Union, like the famous Zubatoff Unions in Russia But the fraction work of Imperialism does not necessarily take this form It varies from simple spying and informing, which is in itself not strictly fraction work at all through the advocacy of a reactionary and reformist policy to mischief making, the creation of splits etc and pseudo revolutionism and provocation Naturally this kind of fraction work cannot be avowed It is indeed a Machiavellian underhand game

The reformists, though they do not advertise it, make less of a secret of their policy The Strike Committee of the Bombay Textile strike of 1928 was openly conducted on this basis from both sides The fraction work of the Right-Wing in the All India Trade Union Congress was for years conducted almost openly though they were not a very disciplined or united fraction as Mr Kirk complains (See P 1206 )

We can afford to be open about our fraction work and formation of nuclei etc in working class organisations Open, that is to say so far as the workers, not the Police, are concerned, because our interests differ in no way from those of the workers We are the genuine working-class party and have no interest in concealing our identity and policy from the workers

Equally in regard to the other bodies we are not concerned to hide our identity We are concerned only with bodies in which there is some objective possibility of securing allies for the working-class or of getting sympathy for our programme Thus in the Congress or in petty-bourgeois youth organisations which we considered, contained sections which were potentially revolutionary, and capable of supporting the workers and peasants in the revolutionary struggle, we put forward our programme for the national revolution

In all such cases we do our best to convince by action those to whom we put our programme that we are really concerned to carry that programme out. We become the "busy-bodies", through whom you can really get something done. We can do this successfully because we are not putting forward a sham programme in which we do not believe but a practical programme which we really do want to carry out.

### **Immediate Demands**

This brings us to the next question, that of partial demands and immediate programmes. The Prosecution assume that this is all bluff: we simply want to capture the "affections" of the workers by getting them immediate improvements and so on, with a view to leading them forward like sheep to carry out our programme without their understanding it.

We have already shown the falsity of this. We are genuinely concerned to get improvements and to defend the position of the workers against attacks. In fact we are the only working-class party which at all times is willing to lead a fight over economic questions. Again, this is because our interests are those of the working class. The reformists are the servants of the bourgeoisie, and if the bourgeoisie are sufficiently firmly opposed to the demands of the workers, they have to obey. Further, unlike the reformists, we do not shrink from the prospect of a revolution. In the present period any large scale (or small scale) economic struggle of the workers is fought most bitterly by the Capitalists with all the powers of the State to help them. Consequently any such conflict is a direct lesson to the workers in the necessity of overthrow of the bourgeois State, that is a lesson in revolution. This is realised by the reformists, who in consequence become all the more afraid of the economic struggle of the workers, and concentrate all energy on sabotaging direct struggles and leading the attention of the workers into other spheres.

This has led to a rather curious situation. It is the traditional reproach of the reformists that the revolutionaries and Communists are only concerned with Utopian theories having no practically application or importance, while they the reformists, are concerned with the "bread and butter" questions which really touch the workers' interests. This was never true but as the situation becomes more revolutionary, it becomes more obviously false. It is now the reformists who shrink from touching 'bread and butter questions', and who devote themselves to distracting the attention of the workers by concentrating on more and more petty questions [see the remarks of Purcell on the Indian Trade Unions, D 145(30)], or by vague talk about Socialism and so on. A clear example is given by P 709, which shows how the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain was at one time conducting a very radical campaign (apparently) for the international unity of the Socialist Parties of the world and reconciliation between the two Internationals. [See also their manifesto, D 95(1)] But at that time there were going on or approaching struggles over wages and such simple matters in various industries, and the ILP refused to join with the Communist Party on the straight forward working class programme of supporting these struggles.

It is quite true that it is usually useless to put our programme in its full form before an inexperienced worker. It is a somewhat complicated and abstract programme, the whole meaning of which he cannot understand at once, though we can as are the Prosecution that workers in general come to understand it much more easily than do members of the bourgeoisie. We follow the very sound principle of letting the workers learn by experience. A worker who has been through strikes and victimisation and has come in contact with the Police and the Law Courts, usually needs very little teaching to convince him of the reality of the class struggle and the soundness of the Marxian conception of the State. This is the meaning of our tactics in relation to the

immediate demands of the workers. We are not out to deceive the workers in any way. We need not, because our theory of historical development is sound; events are working out as we postulate; the economic struggle of the workers leads directly to revolution.

### **"Making use of the Nationalist Bourgeoisie"**

The Prosecution have made great play with our alleged tactics of "making use" of the national bourgeoisie and then throwing them over. We are the astute Machiavellian intriguers once more, who are going to hoodwink the innocent babes of the Congress. But again of course we are entirely misrepresented. Our relation with the national bourgeoisie is plain and is openly stated. We can maintain a united front with them if they are pursuing a genuinely revolutionary policy, and are willing to allow us freedom of agitation and organisation. If they do not fulfil both of these conditions there is no question of our "using" them.

In India the former of these conditions has never been fulfilled. The bourgeoisie have never pursued a revolutionary struggle. And we have never "used" them. We have always tried to win their followers away from them by openly denouncing and exposing them as reformists and putting forward our own revolutionary programme in contrast to theirs. We cannot see any form of "making use" of the nationalist bourgeoisie in this

On the other hand the national bourgeoisie constantly try to make use of the masses for their purposes. In the Non-cooperation campaign and in the Civil Disobedience campaign it is the masses, the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasants, and to a certain extent the workers, who do a large part of the actual work and undergo the suffering. The bulk of the Civil Disobedience prisoners in the District Jail Meerut came from the villages and were in most cases peasants.

But the classical case of the bourgeoisie making use of the masses for the purpose of the national reformist struggle is in China. It was on the strength of the mass revolutionary movement that the Chinese bourgeoisie secured such advantages as they were able to get from the Imperialist powers, and when they had gained as much as was possible and in order to prevent the mass movement in its turn from becoming dangerous to their class position they treacherously formed an alliance with Imperialism and fought against the mass revolutionary movement with the utmost ferocity. It was not we who used them. They made the most brilliant and successful use of us.

### **The United Front**

Allied with the cases previously considered go the tactics of the United Front. This method is always held up as the supreme example of the rascality of the Communists. Again this impression is quite unjustified. As the Magistrate has pointed out (Committal Order page 9) Communists have no monopoly of tactics of this sort. Anybody is perfectly free to try it if he thinks he has a superior policy which can win support. It is only because the Communist policy is a fundamentally honest policy which does not depend upon deceiving anybody that Communists are always free to propose and conduct a united struggle for a common aim. Those who fear exposure are not so free to conduct this policy.

The united front in the working class struggle in its usual form is put forward directly to the workers, in disregard of the reformist leaders, with the avowed object of leading the workers away from reformism to a militant and revolutionary policy and leadership. Its success is made possible solely because the reformists depend upon deceit to maintain their position. On the strength of traditions and past work the reformists have a reputation for defending the interests of the workers, under cover of which they betray the workers' interests now. The united front is intended frankly to expose this position of the reformist leaders.

But this is not the whole of its purpose. It is intended genuinely to secure the unity of the working-class forces in the struggle.



And for this purpose the Communists may sometimes conclude a temporary alliance even with the reformist leaders, if that is felt to be absolutely necessary. An example of this is given by the Textile strike in Bombay in 1928. For the purpose of the immediate struggle the unity of the workers was the first essential. And to secure this a pact with the reformist leaders had to be made. Of course it in no way restricted the freedom of organisation and propaganda of either side.

A similar case occurs in P 2491 (File of 'International Press Correspondence' Volume VI, No 40, May 1926). Here a resolution is given which was passed by an enlarged session of the F C C I which contains the passage

The Comintern affirms that in the interest of unity all Communists will agree to discontinue the independent existence of the R I L U and its amalgamation with the Amsterdam International on the basis of summoning a single world Congress of both Trade Union Internationals "

At that time the situation of the working-class generally was one of retreat and disorganisation in face of a powerful offensive by the bourgeoisie. The Communist International thought it possible to secure the essential requirement of the movement, a genuine unification of the Trade Union Movement of the world, which of course would have strengthened it greatly and give it increased fighting ability. For this purpose it was willing to see the R I L U dissolved as a separate body. The Amsterdam International of course refused this perfectly fair and honest proposal.

The same sort of principles apply in the case of other movements. The only case specifically mentioned in the records is that contained in P 56 (Political Resolution) in which the Workers' and Peasants Party declared that its attitude towards the "Independence League" should be one of "united front". This was done, as is frankly stated in the resolution, because while the programme and stated policies of the "Independence League" and the Workers' and Peasants' Party are somewhat similar, it was realised that this was a deception on the part of the leaders of the "Independence League". If that League were to have turned out

after all to be a genuine body, believing in a mass programme for the national revolution, there would of course have been no objection to its amalgamation with the Workers' and Peasants' Party. In the actual conditions the only sound policy was to expose the deceitfulness of its leaders in putting forward a programme in which they did not believe (which was exposed and denounced openly in the same resolution) and to win away from them those of their followers who did believe in the programme.

### **Gandhism**

The next subject with which we have to deal is Gandhism. It has been referred to in a previous section, but has not been treated in a unified manner as a political method and system of tactic.

The Prosecution had confused the issue in connection with Gandhism. They said correctly that we are vehemently opposed to the policy of Mr. Gandhi, but the reasons they give for this are inadequate and false. The reasons they gave for our opposition to Gandhism are these: (1) that it stands for Independence, (2) that Mr. Gandhi has "religious scruples," and (3) that he led the Non-Co-operation Movement forward to the point of revolution and then called it off.

We have already discussed the first at some length. We oppose Mr. Gandhi and his policy, not because he stands for Independence, but because he does not stand for Independence. The second point is only partially and indirectly true. The third is correct.

But even this is not a sufficient statement of the position. It is not because of any particular occurrence, important though that was, that we oppose Gandhism. We oppose it because it is a complete and well-thought-out system of bourgeois national reformism. This system like any reformist programme has two sides, one the achievement of reforms by peaceful and constitutional means, the other the opposition to revolution, and of these the latter is as usual in practice the more important.

Gandhism was in its earlier days not distinctively a bourgeois system of tactics. It rather voiced the interests, in some ways more radical, in others more reactionary, of the rural petty-bourgeoisie

and similar sections. This was shown especially by its opposition to industrialism. Its originator and prophet, Mr. Gandhi, may still stick to these features as a matter of personal belief, but in his actual political practice he has shed all tendencies of this sort, and this combined with the advantage of his reputation as a saint, which gives him great power over the masses, and the like, has enabled him to become the representative and spokesman of the Indian National bourgeoisie.

By means of Gandhism, the bourgeoisie is able to mobilise mass support to a far larger extent than it would otherwise dare to do. It claims to speak in the name of the peasants, because of the Khaddar programme and because it has ventured from time to time to launch limited and strictly safeguarded no-tax campaigns. It even claims to speak for the workers on the strength of the tame unions, especially of textile workers at Ahmedabad. These advantages, together with the personality of Mr. Gandhi, which acts as of powerful unifying force, constitute the positive value of the policy from the bourgeois point of view.

The negative or anti-revolutionary side of the policy, is even more valuable to the bourgeoisie. The influence of Gandhism on the working-class is not inconsiderable. It is most intense in Ahmedabad, but is found to a certain extent all over the country. And it is a most reactionary influence. The Ahmedabad Labour Union is one of the worst cases in the country of an openly class collaborationist Union, run with the object of preventing the workers from obtaining any improvements, and keeping them quiet and peaceful. It actively discourages class consciousness, for example by refusing to affiliate to the All-India Trade Union Congress, and preaches, not raising wages to bring a higher standard of life, but voluntary lowering of the standard of life, in order to live within the actual wages. Even Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth condemned this Union [See D 145 (30)]. Mr. Gandhi pursues the same policy in regard to other sections of workers. In 1928 he told the scavengers of Ahmedabad, who were demanding better pay, that he would not support their demand until they had given up drink and adopted clean habits. Similarly during the Bombay textile strike in 1928, when workers from Bombay went

to get help from those of Ahmedabad, Mr. Gandhi discouraged the giving of donations by the Ahmedabad workers. (See P. 1713 and P. 1716).

In relation to the peasants, the policy of Gandhism shows its reactionary character in the following ways: (1) It seeks support mainly in the ranks of the rich peasants. This is notoriously the case in the Bardoli Taluka where a strong peasant movement had developed under the Gandhist leadership. (2) It is confined to the ryotwari areas which constitute less than half the area of British India and are divided into patches by the zamindari areas and States. A movement in the ryotwari areas would not develop freely owing to these territorial limitations. In the zamindari areas, the propaganda of Gandhism is mainly concerned with open advocacy of class-collaboration and the unity of interests between the peasants and the zamindars. (3) The propaganda of Khaddar, which is meant primarily for peasants, is obviously a reformist non-revolutionary measure. It is confessedly designed to increase the income of the peasants by making them work in their spare time. If it has any effect in this direction it will clearly tend to make him more contented with his lot, rather than increase the active dissatisfaction which is required to raise his standard effectively. And it has no effect in increasing a sense of solidarity with other peasants; on the contrary it will tend to encourage the individualist outlook which is the great weakness of the peasantry.

Generally the anti-revolutionary character of Gandhist policy and tactics is confirmed by all its prominent features: the absence of an aggressive or militant attitude ("love your enemy")—the adoption of "passive" resistance, "Civil" Disobedience etc., the tactics of "offering" oneself for arrest, "filling the jails" and so on, which have the effect of assisting Imperialism to remove from the arena of struggle with the minimum of difficulty all the most active and conscious men; etc. etc. We have dealt previously with the chief campaigns, the Non-Co-operation and the Civil Disobedience Movements, conducted under the leadership of Gandhism. The same kind of policy and result is found in minor matters. A clear case is the Bardoli campaign of 1928, when the

attitude of direct sabotage of militant struggle was adopted by the Gandhist leaders. The demand made was only for "re-examination" of the matter by the Government officials, it being promised in advance that their verdict would be obeyed, whatever its nature. The campaign was resolutely confined to the Bardoli Taluka, although the peasants in other districts sent in offers to start non-payment of taxes in sympathy, and the whole affair was made to end up in an orgy of class-collaboration—compliments to the Governor of Bombay on his "tact" and so forth [P 415 (13) and P 416 (5)]

The religious question enters into the matter so far as we are concerned only to this extent, that like all religious propaganda that of Mr. Gandhi tends to obscure class differences and in other ways have a reactionary effect, and that in this case it gives a particular shape to the tactics of reformism and invests them with a traditional sanctity (Satyagraha and the like). Exponents of Gandhism have frequently boasted that it stands between India and revolution. This is the fact and this is the substance of our opposition to it. Gandhism is an immensely powerful means used by the reformist national bourgeoisie, with which it corrupts and misleads the revolutionary movement of the masses, and utilises it for its own reformist ends.

### **Individual Terrorism**

It is unnecessary for us to deal with the policy of individual terrorism at any length. The Magistrate has correctly pointed out that we oppose terrorism not because of any sentiment on the subject of violence but because we are convinced of its uselessness as a practical revolutionary policy. But a rather more complete statement of the case is desirable. We look upon this as upon other policies from the class stand-point. Individual terrorism is essentially a petty bourgeois policy. It arises historically in conditions when the petty bourgeoisie is in a state of opposition to an autocratic oppressive rule, (as under the Czarism during the last century) but the mass revolutionary movement is yet ill-developed. The petty-bourgeoisie being more exploited and oppressed is impatient with the characteristically feeble, reformist, constitutional opposition of the bourgeoisie to the

autocracy. But it finds apparently so ally in the masses, and has therefore to act on its own. The petty-bourgeoisie, however, as we have pointed out, is such a class that effective solidarity or mass action on its part is practically impossible. And unlike the bourgeoisie it cannot buy other classes to do its fighting for it. Accordingly a section takes to terrorism. The policy itself bears the stamp of the outlook of the petty-bourgeoisie. It arises from an exaggeration of the role of the individual, the official or potentate attacked, and results in an exaggeration of the importance of the individual who conducts the attack.

As the mass movement develops and its potentialities as a revolutionary force become clearer, the terrorists tend to some extent to come over the mass movement, and such parties developed as the Socialist Revolutionary Party in Russia (an Agrarian Terrorist Party) and, at an earlier stage, the Socialist Republican Army in India. But while the policy of terrorism remains on the programme, it tends to absorb all the energies of the most active and self-sacrificing members and quite unnecessarily to deliver over to the police not only themselves but also their fellows. Consequently we oppose it even as a subsidiary line of policy.

We are of course not insensible of the revolutionary virtues displayed by the terrorists, nor of the advance which such parties as the Socialist Republican Army have achieved over orthodox nationalism. They represent an advance in as much as they oppose non-violence, they give up consciously all mystical obscurantist philosophies in favour of a realistic progressive outlook, they advocate, at any rate in theory, the mass revolutionary movement, and they show the necessity of illegal organisation and the way in which it may be effected.

But we consider that the courage and self-sacrifice of the terrorists are wasted and the advance they have made, important though it is, not enough. They have advanced from the position of the bourgeois nationalists, but have been reached only the limits of petty-bourgeois nationalism. In order really to serve the cause of Independence and national revolution they have to go one step further, to the mass revolutionary movement.

### **Constitutional Advance**

It is necessary here to touch upon a question which has been raised in the case, especially by the evidence of Mr Brailsford. This witness stated that the Labour and Socialist International would not disapprove of revolution in cases in which constitutional means for the attainment of the objects of the revolution are lacking. We are not concerned with how far this is a correct statement—we can concede that it represents the theoretical views of a large part of the Labour and Socialist International though the practice of that body does not support its theory. Our concern is with the conception of the possibility of revolution, or the attainment of the objects of revolution, by constitutional means.

The question may not appear to be of immediate practical importance in India. But it is possible that as a result of the reforms and an extension of the franchise further efforts will be made to encourage parliamentary illusions among the masses and even among the working-class. Our view, as is well known, is that even in conditions of the fullest development of bourgeois democracy under universal suffrage, 'free' institutions, a 'democratic tradition', etc., it is impossible for the working-class to take power or realise Socialism by Parliamentary means. P 1719 (R. Palme Dutt 'Communism') says 'The Communists do not reject the current conceptions of democracy because they believe in the superiority of the few, but because they believe that the phrases of democracy bear no relation to present realities. The divorce between the realities of power and the theory in modern democratic States has been noted by observers of all schools. It is the special point of the Communists to insist that this divorce is not due to accidental or remediable causes, but is inherent in the nature of capitalist democracy. Democracy in fact is held to be unrealisable in capitalist society because of the fundamental helplessness of the propertyless man, the parliamentary forms only serve to veil the reality of the bourgeois dictatorship by an appearance of popular consent, which is rendered unreal by the capitalist control of the social structure, and even this veil is cast aside in moments of any stress by open assumption of emergency

dictatorial powers. The plea that this situation may be remedied by education and propaganda is met by the reply that all the large scale organs of education and propaganda are under capitalist control . . . Where the Communists differ from other believers in the ultimate victory of the working-class is that they do not believe victory will be achieved until after a very much more severe struggle than is ordinarily contemplated. They believe that the ruling class will use every means, political, economic and military, to defend its privileges and that the final decision will not be reached without open civil war. In support of this they quote evidence to show the readiness of the ruling class in many countries to fling constitutional considerations to the winds when their privileges are in danger."

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The most essential grounds of our criticism of bourgeois democracy are shortly and clearly given here. It only remains to call attention to the efforts which have been or are supposed to have been made to achieve the objects of the revolution by non-revolutionary means. We need not examine at any length the results of these attempts on the part of the German, Scandinavian Australian, British, and other Social-Democratic Parties. They have all achieved essentially the same result. When placed in the position of taking office they have been confronted with the alternative, either to administer Capitalism peacefully as the bourgeois parties do, or to attempt to work for Socialism, which means destroying the bourgeois State machine, and breaking the economic and political power of Capitalism, and hence civil war. It is too much to say that they have been considered the latter possibility. Completely corrupted throughout their upper strata (largely as a result of the working of the Parliamentary machinery itself) by capitalist ideas and interests, without any serious socialist intentions at all, they have hardly even thought of a possible alternative policy, and have simply administered the capitalist State. This is the universal and inevitable fate of any attempt to get Socialism through the bourgeois constitution.

But we do not therefore advocate, as the Prosecution charge us, taking power without the actual support of the population. In the



case of Russia as we have shown, the mass of the people was with the Bolsheviks and Left Social Revolutionary Parties at the time of their taking power P 719 says

Communists, while rejecting current democracy, differ from syndicalism and other revolutionary philosophies which proclaim the right of the "militant minority" to endeavour to change society. The glorification of the minority and of the *coup d'etat* really belongs to the Blanquist school, which was always vigorously opposed by Marxism. Marxism taught that the liberation of the workers could only be the act of the workers themselves and that all the Communists could do was to endeavour to guide the struggle of the workers into its realisation in the Dictatorship of the Proletariat "

Bourgeois democracy does not respond to the real desires and interests of the population. It is so inflexible that even at a time of intense revolutionary crisis, when the mass of the population passes over to the revolutionary camp, bourgeois democracy cannot in general register this situation, as was shown by the history of the Constituent Assembly in Russia.

Finally even if the bourgeois democratic machinery can on occasion reflect the real revolutionary will of the majority of the people it offers to them no guarantee of power. Whatever parliamentary majority we get for revolution we shall have to fight for power outside Parliament. This is the ultimate conclusive answer to those who advocate constitutional progress. The legislature is not an organ of force. It does not control the State machine the civil service, army, Police etc. except by the consent of the latter. To overcome the bourgeois State machine, which is an organ of force we want more than a talking-shop we must have a more powerful force and this is the militant support of the mass of the population.

This is the value of Parliamentary reformism in the advanced capitalist countries. It would obviously tend to take the same road in a colony in which the attempt was made to achieve independence by constitutional means. Even accepting the inconceivable, that an apparently democratic form of Government were established in India, revolution would be no

less necessary and inevitable than now, under unconcealed Imperialist dictatorship. We do not say that democratic forms, universal suffrage, etc., under the present Imperialist rule, supposing that Imperialism could and would grant them, would be of no advantage. But their advantage would be indirect only. They would afford some facilities for the education and organisation of the masses, which present conditions do not allow but that is all.

### **The "Revolutionary" Tactics of the Bourgeoisie**

In the course of its oppositional struggle against Imperialism a section of the bourgeoisie and of the petty-bourgeoisie has tended to adopt a semi-revolutionary phraseology and has talked not only of complete independence, but of the seizure of power. The method or slogan principally associated with this movement is that of the "Constituent Assembly."

In the classical bourgeois revolutions of the nineteenth century the bourgeoisie, which rose to power through the assistance of the exploited classes of the old feudal society, in some cases created an organ of democratic power called the Constituent Assembly. This was a national body elected on the basis of adult suffrage, whose function was to formulate the constitution and the rights and liberties of the people. The Constituent Assembly played an important part in the French Revolution. It was convened by the victorious bourgeoisie to consolidate its victory over feudalism. The Constituent Assembly of the French Revolution, historically speaking, inaugurated the epoch of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism.

History has taught us that the democratic achievements of the bourgeoisie, which certainly marked an advance in their time over feudal absolutism, soon proved to be hollow from the point of view of the toiling masses. The bourgeois parliaments became organs of bourgeois dictatorship. The Thesis on Democracy and Dictatorship of the Second Congress of the Communist International puts this point clearly (P. 2395 pages 42-43):

"During the previous epochs parliament had performed a certain progressive function as the weapon of developing Capitalism

But under the present conditions of unbridled Imperialism, Parliament has become a tool of falsehood, deceit, violence and enervating gossip. In the face of imperialistic devastation, plunder, violation, robbery and ruination, parliamentary reforms, devoid of system, of constancy and of definite plan, have lost every significance for the working masses "

Bourgeois democratic revolutions in the present epoch, which is characterised by the decline of Capitalism, cannot lead the toiling masses to freedom and democracy through parliamentarism. This has been amply proved by the lessons of the Russian Revolution. The slogan of the Constituent Assembly, which was raised by the bourgeoisie immediately after the success of the first revolution, was a device on their part to consolidate the power of the bourgeoisie by the help of a parliamentary system. The bourgeoisie could not satisfy the elementary demands of the masses for freedom, democracy, peace and bread. The actual organisations of the toiling masses, the councils of workers' deputies and the peasants' and soldiers' committees, which were the actual organs of struggle and had been responsible for the overthrow of the autocracy, were thrust aside and their demands ignored. The first revolution was thus unable to complete even the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution. Only the November Revolution was able to complete these tasks and open the road to social revolution.

This is the mode of development of the bourgeois revolution and of the Constituent Assembly, its organ. This history shows that the Constituent Assembly is principally an organ for the consolidation of the power of the bourgeoisie under the cover of democracy after the revolution. It is, in any case essentially a bourgeois institution, of the parliamentary type. Its employment in any given case therefore presupposes in the first place that the bourgeoisie is the class which leads the revolution, or at any rate that the bourgeoisie takes part in the revolution. Now in India this is not the case. We have shown at length that the essential character of the bourgeoisie in India is non-revolutionary, and actually, as the revolution develops, counter-revolutionary. This alone determines that the Constituent Assembly has no place in the history of the Indian Revolution.

But although it is essentially an organ of the bourgeoisie, the working-class can in certain circumstances support the demand for the Constituent Assembly, as did the Bolshevik Party for a certain period during the revolution. Lenin justified this demand in the following words:

"The demand for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly formed in the past a perfectly legitimate part of the programme of the revolutionary Social Democracy, because in a bourgeois republic the Constituent Assembly constitutes the highest form of democracy, and because the imperialist republic, with Kerensky at its head, in creating a parliament, was preparing an adulteration of the elections accompanied by numerous infractions of democracy."

The Workers' and Peasants' Parties have from time to time placed before the Indian National Congress the slogan of a Constituent Assembly. In its manifesto to the Madras Session of the Congress, the Workers' and Peasants' Party says:

"A national Constituent Assembly guaranteeing complete national independence and the democratisation of national life in every respect—this must be the main plank of the Congress platform." (P. 23).

The Indian National Congress was then making its first historic gesture as the champion of Indian independence. A resolution demanding complete national independence was for the first time passed at the Madras Session. But was the Workers' and Peasants' Party correct in estimating that bourgeois nationalism was proceeding to a militant struggle for Independence? Or was it preparing an adulteration of elections, accompanied by numerous infractions of democracy? Subsequent events showed that the bourgeoisie was preparing for an "All Parties' Conference" to outline a scheme of Dominion Status, as a counter-poise to the Simon Commission. Its independence resolution was to turn into a dominion status resolution the next year. The renewed gesture of independence at the Lahore Congress, the mock heroics of some of the Congress leaders, who talked of the "capture of power" were preludes to a mass reformist struggle, which was carried on with one eye on the possibilities of suitable compromise with

Imperialism, and the other eye on the best means of holding the mass revolutionary movement in check. The nationalist bourgeoisie has proved that it is not only incapable of leading the national revolution, but that it is fast developing an elaborate technique for preventing and opposing the same. A class which still pins its faith on a Round Table Conference, cannot be expected to take the slogan of Constituent Assembly very seriously, a slogan which has sense and meaning only in the eventuality of the capture of power by the bourgeoisie.

The Workers' and Peasants' Parties realised the anti-revolutionary character of the national bourgeoisie early enough. If they wanted any convincing, the retreat of the Congress after its demonstration at the Madras Session to the All-Parties Conference, was sufficient to convince them that the national bourgeoisie was not capable of pursuing a revolutionary policy. At the end of that year at the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference, the slogan of the Constituent Assembly was dropped.

Today it is as unreal and divorced from actual conditions as it was in 1928. This slogan can have no meaning in a bourgeois reformist movement in which the bourgeoisie is scheming to gain a few concessions through reformist channels. At best it can be the slogan of a revolutionary bloc of the bourgeoisie, the workers and the peasants. Is such a revolutionary bloc against Imperialism possible in India? We have shown that it is not. The slogan may attract certain of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. But again these are a class who are not able to lead the mass revolution. If we were to set out with the idea of delivering the movement over into the hands of the petty-bourgeoisie, and therefore ultimately into those of the treacherous and counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, we should go about it by starting the movement off with the slogan of the Constituent Assembly. The slogan has no meaning for the masses. It is totally unsuited to a mass movement led by the working-class as the national revolutionary movement in India must be.

The revolutionary bloc which will carry through the national revolution in India is that of the workers and the peasants and

other exploited classes. These classes can only depend upon their own mass organisations, not upon the parliamentary forms of the bourgeoisie. They will work for the formation of strike committees and peasant committees, which as the struggle develops, will expand into the Soviets.

The formation of Soviets is not the immediate task in India. The revolutionary struggle has not yet developed to that pitch. But it is the duty of the party of the proletariat to show to its allies the pitfalls of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois pseudo-revolutionary methods of struggle, and to make clear to them the necessity of the development of their own mass organisations into organs of struggle and power. The Constituent Assembly is, as Lenin said, the highest form of democracy in a bourgeois republic. But India will not see this stage. The Indian revolution will proceed directly to the still higher democratic form, the Soviets of the workers and peasants.

### **Revolutionary Mass Action**

The method which we propose for the achievement of the revolution is the mass action of the people as a whole. It is a method which arises naturally from the immediate needs of the struggle of the masses. The spontaneous struggle of the masses for demands principally and originally of an economic character, which is doomed to defeat if confined to its elementary and anarchic form, is brought by education and organisation to a higher level, and eventually to the logically inevitable attack upon the state power of Imperialism, the great obstacle in the way of all the struggles of the masses. As we have explained, the organisations which the masses spontaneously form in the course of the struggle, the strike committees, village committees, etc., will through the experience of the struggle and the necessities of the position which will confront them, be forced to expand and develop into the organs of the new state power, the Soviets. There is nothing artificial or impossible about this proposal. All popular revolutions in history have followed a path of this kind, only differing in the greater or less distance to which they have been allowed to pursue it. Events have already shown that this is the course which will be followed in India also.

The workers' movement has already gone some distance along the road which we have just sketched. Many sections of workers are long past the stage of merely local and sectional agitation for immediate demands. They have set up permanent organisations of more than local extent, some of which are tending to extend all over the country. The nation-wide federal organisation of labour, the All-India Trade Union Congress, which was originally set up by the bourgeois labour leaders in imitation of the institutions of other countries, is being increasingly taken over by the workers themselves. The leading sections of the workers have already gone beyond a purely economic programme. They are putting forward with their economic demands political demands also, and such demands as are proper for the working-class, independence and socialism. The workers' organisations in many parts of the country now observe May Day regularly [see D 145 (34) (Draft Report to the Jharia Session of the AITUC) and D 144 (1-5 and 7)]. They boycotted the Simon Commission and demonstrated against it [See D 145 (34) page 17, and the depositions of Prosecution witnesses from Bombay and Calcutta], and also boycotted the Whitley Commission very widely. These facts show that a political consciousness is growing. This process will extend. The strength and perfection of the Trade Union organisation is increasing, and the influences of leadership making for reformism are being combated. By the experience of the economic struggle and by demonstrations such as those on May Day and political occasions of importance etc., by means of the working-class press, by working-class education and the like, the class consciousness and political knowledge of the working-class will increase.

The organisation of the peasantry is naturally far weaker and less permanent than that of the working-class. But the peasants frequently show in action a spirit of struggle for their needs and a clear knowledge of the identity of their class enemies. Several incidents, such as the local peasant risings in many places during the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience campaigns, show the consciousness and militancy of the peasants.

Organisation of the agricultural labourers on the lines of Trade Unionism and of the peasants as a whole but especially the poorer sections, for the purpose of pressing their interests against those of the land-owners, Government and other exploiters will spread and by means of the political methods, of which the value has already been tested, of demonstrations and non-payment of rent and taxes, the peasant movement will grow in strength and consciousness.

The petty-bourgeoisie of the towns have practised for some time their characteristic political methods, either terrorism on the one hand or on the other the boycott of British goods and the manufacture of Khaddar, Salt etc. There is plenty of evidence that the ineffectiveness for revolutionary purposes of both these lines of action is being more widely appreciated, and the tendency is growing for the petty-bourgeoisie to take up the work done for example by the Chinese petty-bourgeoisie at a certain stage of the revolution of mass agitation and organisation. In addition the petty-bourgeoisie and the poor population of the towns will tend to organise to fight for their own economic interests, against the unemployment, bad housing conditions, high rents, lack of sanitation, etc. prevailing in the towns.

The strength of the revolutionary movement of these three main sections of the population, in spite of its being systematically led astray and betrayed by the pseudo-revolutionary movement of the bourgeoisie, will grow greater and greater. Ultimately it will culminate possibly in a nation wide campaign of non-payment of taxes and rents by the peasants and a general strike by the workers, and then the time for the armed uprising and the actual seizure of power will have arrived.

The organisational form which the movement will adopt will correspond with its character. Each branch of the movement will form its own sectional organisations of struggle, its factory committees, Trade Unions, Trades Councils, etc., its peasant unions and committees etc. These must be loosely federated together so as to secure the necessary unity of policy and co-ordination of action, in some organisation embodying the anti-imperialist united front of the exploited classes. The form of



organisation appropriate for the purpose is not the Workers' and Peasants Party, as we at one time supposed. The weakness of this type of body has been pointed out by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International. Its programme and line of work are that of the anti-imperialist united front for the attainment of the national democratic revolution. But its form of organisation is too restricted and narrow for this purpose, depending as it does mainly upon individual membership.

Corresponding with the decisive part which the workers as a class will inevitably take in the revolution, will be the leading and organising functions of the working-class party, the Communist Party. The Communist Party is the working class Party in the sense that it represents the interests of the working-class directly, while it may be said to represent those of any other class such as the peasantry indirectly or incidentally and it is imbued with the distinctively working-class ideology and theory, Communism. But objectively its struggle is in the interest of all the working and exploited sections of the population and can and will obtain support among them, the peasants, especially the landless agricultural proletariat and the poor peasants, the poor classes of the towns and the artisans, and to some extent among the petty-bourgeoisie and intellectuals. The Communist Party of India will then be in a position really to lead and co-ordinate the whole movement and as the appropriate time to deal the decisive blows at Imperialism by leading a direct campaign upon it.

Further the rigidly disciplined, skilful, illegally conducted work of the Communist Party will be needed in certain essential departments of revolutionary activity of a technical character. The Communist Party will undertake the issue of periodical and other literature for agitation and propaganda, necessary for the education and organisation of the masses, and will conduct other educational work, and the work of propaganda among the rank and file of the army and the Police force, essential for the winning over or neutralising of these very important imperialist strongholds and the work of supplying the forces of revolution with arms can only be done by the Communist Party.

P 2365 ("From the 5th to the 6th World Congress of the Communist International") contains much information on the success of various parties of Comintern in conducting their work on a very large scale in conditions of illegality, and in combining the illegal existence of the party with leadership of the open mass movement. We would refer particularly to the case of China (page 455)

"Notwithstanding the unparalleled White Terror and the physical extermination of its best cadres the Party has been able to keep its Party apparatus intact as well as the lower organisations (primarily workers' groups) although it has to work underground. It has now about 30,000 members, concentrated in the biggest proletarian centres, (Hankow, Shanghai)

In Poland, (page 285)

"Notwithstanding all difficulties—the illegal status of the Party and the terror which grew more intense after the Fascist *coup d'état*—the Party has increased its influence among the masses and actually was the leader in several mass actions

In Italy (page 163) even Trade Union activity and organisation is illegal but nevertheless the Party is strong and has great influence among the masses, while illegal publication of newspapers etc., is carried on successfully, illegal party and Trade Union conferences are held etc. The same kind of conditions are found in the majority of countries

Thus the bourgeois terror which aims, as this report has to record, at the "physical extermination" of the revolutionary working-class movement in many countries, fails to achieve its object. The forces of revolution gather and strengthen underground, to burst out when the situation is ripe and overthrow the bourgeois State. The same will inevitably be the development in India. In spite of any measures of spying and terrorism which the Imperialist Government may adopt the revolutionary movement, led by the Communist Party of India, will find means to evade them and carry out its work.

### **The Use of Violence**

The end of our revolutionary preparation and organisation will then be the violent overthrow of the present State, the organ of the imperialist dictatorship, the complete destruction of the imperialist power, and the establishment of the workers' and

peasants' power. It will be done by force. We definitely contemplate and prepare for the use of force to attain our object, the national revolution, and to consolidate it. Any proposal to achieve the revolution or maintain its gains without the use of force is in our view an absurdity, and can only be a deceitful trick to hamper the progress of revolution.

It is perhaps necessary here to point out that we do not advocate indiscriminately the use of force, at any time, opportune or otherwise, or of any kind suitable or otherwise. The Magistrate admits this in regard to terrorism. The charge has also been levelled at us in the Legislative Assembly, and in the report of the Bombay Riots Inquiry Committee (1929), that we brought about the communal riots in Bombay in February 1929 with a view to utilise this outbreak of violence for our own ends. The charge is completely disproved by the exhibits [P. 702 (A Manifesto of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bombay on the communal question), P. 786, P. 951 (1 to 9 and 21), etc.] and is in any case on the face of it ridiculous. We do not gain but lose heavily by the communal spilling of the population along "vertical" lines, which obscures and confuses its 'horizontal' division along class lines. The only interests which gain from communalism are the exploiting interests generally, and Imperialism in particular, which undoubtedly were responsible for these riots and the attendant bloodshed. We obviously cannot profit from this kind of violence.

Nonetheless we do advocate the use of violence, and the Prosecution have made great play with this question, and have smacked their lips over the "few litres of blood" which we believe will have to be shed. This is the most revolting hypocrisy. Imperialist rule in India and everywhere else was established by violence and always has been and is maintained only by the systematic use of violence. The system of Capitalism has always involved the violent suppression of the working-class and other exploited sections, and as it grows, it becomes continually more violent and destructive. The period of Imperialism has seen an orgy of bloodshed and cruelty such as never could have occurred previously in the history of the world. From the seventies of the last century, when British Imperialism began vigorously to consolidate and extend its colonial empire, it has waged a

continuous series of wars in all parts of the world, in Egypt and the Sudan, in innumerable places in South, East, West and Central Africa, in Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Burma, Malaya and China, and it has been followed enthusiastically by all the other imperialist powers. The colonial wars culminated in the European War of 1914-18 during which nine millions of men were directly killed, while still bigger numbers died of disease and famine, arising out of the war, or were wounded. Since "the war to end war," war, directly or indirectly waged by the imperialist powers, has continued, in the intervention in Russia, in Turkey, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Morocco and China, and all the while the White Terror of the bourgeoisie has gone on on a scale never before thought of.

These things should be remembered when the Prosecution, the representatives of Imperialism, condemn us for contemplating the use of force. As R. Palme Dutt sums up the general question (P. 719 "Communism"):

"It is the conditions of society that are producing chaos and revolution; it is the object of the Communists to end those conditions by giving conscious direction to the instinctive forces of revolt instead of vainly seeking to stem them. No error in fact could be greater than to suppose that the Communists are out to "make" a revolution in order to impose their system upon mankind. The Communist Parties, far from conjuring up civil war artificially, rather seek to shorten its duration. In the Communist conception, the alternative to Proletarian Dictatorship is not peace. It is war and blockade, famine and disease, blind revolts and the break-up of civilisation".

We openly declare that we shall have to use violence, the violence of the mass revolutionary movement. But in contrast to imperialist violence, an ocean which has engulfed the whole world for generations, our violence can be but a drop. As opposed to imperialist violence, which, while Imperialism lasts is permanent, our violence is temporary. As opposed to imperialist violence, which is used to maintain an obsolete, barbarous, exploiting system, our violence is progressive and will be used to attain the next great step forward in the march of the human race. This is our justification of violence.

## VIII COMMUNISM AND BOURGEOIS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The Prosecution have tried to ridicule us and to bring us into disfavour with the public generally by dwelling on our supposed opposition to "everything which the normal man considers decent," especially God, the family, nationalism, and "a sense of humour." We are surprised that they should have taken this line so late in the day. But perhaps they have not read the Communist Manifesto, in which 80 years ago Marx and Engels returned a biting and devastating reply to exactly this sort of scaremongering nonsense.

The matter would not be worth our attention if it did not raise, in one or two cases, an issue of importance, about which there is likely to be misconception. Such are the question of religion, the family and sex relations generally, bourgeois morality, and a similar matter brought up by the evidence of Mr Brailsford, namely individual liberty and other cultural achievements of the bourgeoisie.

Our view on all these matters is decided in general terms by our theory of social evolution, the materialist conception of history. We have quoted previously from Marx's "Critique of Political Economy" (P 1776, page 176) "The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life."

As the material basis, the mode of production evolves, so also do all the institutions of society and its modes of thought.

### **The Family**

The family has a history of such evolution, which it is unnecessary for us to follow here. It is enough to say that in the world of the present day the family as an institution is important in proportion as society is backward. As civilisation advances the family becomes less prominent as a social institution and tends more and more to break-up. In particular it is the progress of industrialisation and an urban mode of life which are destroying

the family. The way in which this comes about is obvious. Marx says (P 445 "Capital" Vol. 1. pp. 528-29): ".....large scale industry, which broke up the economic foundation of the old family system and that of the family labour appropriate to that system, was itself sweeping away the old family relations". And "However terrible, however repulsive, the break up of the old family system within the organism of capitalist society may seem, nonetheless large scale industry, by assigning to women and to young persons and to children of both sexes, a decisive role in the socially organised process of production, and a role which has to be fulfilled outside the home, is building the new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relation between the sexes." Further:—"I need hardly say that it is just as stupid to regard the Christo-Teutonic form of the family as absolute, as it is to take the same view of the classical Roman form, or of the classical Greek form, or of the Oriental form—which, by-the-bye, constitute a historically interconnected developmental series."

Under Socialism, industrialisation will increase, most of all in backward countries, and the undermining of the family cannot but proceed even further than it has gone in bourgeois society. It is however, no question of the attitude of socialists or Communists to the matter. The process is going on under Capitalism, and will continue under Socialism.

This is enough to show that the propaganda of the Prosecution on this question is nonsense. But another aspect of it is of importance. The cloak of sentiment which surrounds the family has always been used to cover its use as a means of exploitation. The most obvious example is the peasant family. The permanence of small scale enterprise in agriculture, which has remained a striking contrast to the well-marked tendency of combination and concentration in almost all the other industries, is largely to be explained by the exploitation of the peasant's or small farmer's family, even down to the young children, which gives it an economic advantage which large scale enterprises cannot easily overcome.

This exploitation of the family remains under capitalist conditions. A typical case is presented by P 548 (5) which shows how the fact that the Calcutta Municipal scavengers had to send their wives to work in order to supplement their incomes, was used against any increase in their wages.

We expose the abuse of the family in this way, and we claim that under Socialism only will the use of the family for the exploitation of women and children cease. The rule of the working-class will take energetic measures to carry this out. And generally we consider that the tendency towards the loosening of the ties of the family is a desirable thing for the cultural future of society. But in relation to the family as an institution we have no new principle to expound, and we take no definite line of propaganda.

### **The Position of Women**

Though the two questions are intimately connected, the case is not exactly the same with regard to the position of women in society. The status of women has been traditionally one of inferiority to men, and at times of actual slavery. Under Capitalism there is a certain tendency towards the equalisation of the position of the sexes, which is showing itself strongly now among the urban middle-class in India. But this tendency has limits. Even in the advanced capitalist countries the position of women is still definitely one of inferiority. The franchise was extended to women on the same terms as to men, for the first time only at the General Election of 1929 in Britain, while other legal and customary differences, namely in regard to wage rates are still observed. The Soviet Union is the only country in the world where complete equality in theory and to a large and increasing extent in practice is the rule. P 442-44 (Collections of articles from the Indian press mainly on the U S S R), show that the emancipation of women which is taking place there is one of the matters which has attracted the attention of outside bourgeois observers almost more than anything else.

We associate ourselves with the propaganda for the removal of the traditional bars to the progress of women, such as inequality

of wage rates and the like, relative absence of education and such institutions as the "Purdah". But we emphasise that the complete emancipation of women will be achieved only after the revolution. Conditions in India are still semi-feudal, and the political situation of the country puts an unsurmountable bar in the way of cultural progress. Only in the big towns where bourgeois culture make it way, and there mainly among the upper and middle-classes, is noticeable progress being made. For the bulk of the population this progress can be achieved only after the revolution.

The situation in Great Britain is more advanced than that in India. Nevertheless the Communist Party of Great Britain has to devote attention to the matter. P 2366 (Communist Party Training Course, page 86), emphasises the necessity of this work, but points out that "Revolutionary Marxism knows no specific women's question and no specific women's movement. Communism will be achieved, not by the united efforts of all women of different classes, but by the united struggle of all the exploited".

The subjection and exploitation of women is only one aspect of the subjection and exploitation which is the lot of the great majority even of the men of the human race. It must be solved on class lines, not on sex lines. The Communist Party of Great Britain lays down certain tasks which the Party in its work has to undertake, which amount to: (1) the establishment of complete equality between the sexes within the working-class movement and the abolition of prejudices in the matter among the working-class, (2) the recognition of house wives as a category of workers—producers of the human race—of the highest importance, and the encouragement of struggle by them for the improvement of their position and (3) the drawing of working women into the active working-class fight against Capitalism, especially against their usual position of undercutting men workers.

The tasks of the revolutionary movement in India, though including more elementary questions than these, must be undertaken in the same spirit.



## **Personal Liberty**

The Prosecution have raised the old cry about the destruction of personal freedom under Socialism, and they have been to a certain extent supported by Mr Brailsford. It is necessary to deal with the matter shortly.

We are of course not concerned with any abstract discussion of the nature of freedom of the individual. We accept industrialism and all that it involves in the socialisation and mechanisation of production and life generally. "Restriction of personal freedom" to this extent must go on under an industrial civilisation, whether capitalist or socialist. Rejecting any utopian speculations, we confine ourselves to conditions as they are.

In the first place it is to be noticed that the supposed conquest of personal liberty by the bourgeoisie is to a large extent a myth. In its most prosperous periods Capitalism in certain countries has given a considerable degree of personal freedom to the bourgeoisie. For the poor, the workers or the peasants, such freedom has never existed. Even for the bourgeoisie and the middle classes this freedom is now tending to disappear. The necessities of the period of Imperialism compel the bourgeois State to discipline and organise all its forces for the struggle against other States and against the revolution by extending compulsory military service, increasing taxation, restricting freedom to travel, restricting freedom of expression of opinion, and many in other ways. Even for the ruling class and its hangers-on such a period of crisis as the world is now experiencing must wipe away to a considerable extent the gains in liberty obtained during the "spacious days" of the last century, when war and revolution were not always waiting round the corner. For the exploited class of course, even such degree of freedom as they have won is entirely taken away in present conditions.

During the actual period of revolution, the civil war and the fight against counter-revolution, we of course contemplate frankly a rigorous restriction of the personal liberty of all. These are war conditions, and the strictest methods of dictatorship, amounting if necessity arises to the Red Terror, or proletarian

Martial Law, must be enforced for the safety of the revolution. This however, is a temporary phase. When the period of acute struggle is past and the new regime is firmly established the dictatorship becomes progressively milder. Then an inversion of the previous order is to be seen. The masses find themselves far freer than they can have been under the dictatorship of capital. The bourgeoisie however find themselves under the dictatorship not of their own class but of the hitherto exploited and oppressed classes. Naturally they complain bitterly of the loss of liberty which they have suffered. It is the loss of liberty to exploit others and live an easy and carefree life at their expense.

The same is to be said of the question of the freedom of ideas etc. Under Capitalism there is freedom of expression for bourgeois ideas (within limits. In India or in Fascist Italy the ideas of bourgeois liberalism are suppressed). Revolutionary working class ideas are suppressed, if not by the direct action of the bourgeois State, then with almost equal effect by the working of capitalist economic pressure. Under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat working-class ideology has freedom to develop. Capitalist ideology is suppressed in the degree that it represents a direct danger to the revolution.

The position of those Socialists who, like Mr Brailsford reject Communism, because its revolutionary methods involve a break with the cultural acquisitions of the past, and in particular the suppression of the freedom of the individual, is to be judged in the light of these facts. Apart, that is to say, from the general question of the possibility of establishing Socialism without revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. For we contend that if they reject these things they reject Socialism, and must be content to see the increasing suppression of individual liberty, among other things, as the crisis of Capitalism grows worse, until civilisation is itself destroyed.

This kind of attitude reveals a class content. It is the sentimental unrealistic Socialism of the petty bourgeois intellectuals, who are more concerned with the cultural traditions of which they consider themselves the representatives, than with

the demands of the working-class and its struggle. Sympathetic with the working-class struggle up to the point when it becomes a real menace to Capitalism, this class is then driven by the logic of events, either to return to the side of the bourgeoisie, i.e. to follow the line of the Social Democratic Parties, or to leave the practical struggle altogether and degenerate towards a utopian anarchism.

These people complain that Socialism, by destroying the leisured intellectual class, which has been largely responsible for cultural progress under Capitalism, has destroyed the possibility of all genuine culture. This is disproved by the actual progress made in this sphere under the Soviet regime in the U.S.S.R. There a mass culture is being built up, for the first time in history. Education on equal terms is being extended to all. A completely literate population is already in sight. As the economic position improves, the means of primary, secondary and higher education are being rapidly extended to reach even the most backward sections of the population. The working day in industry is already reduced to seven hours, to six and five for special types of work. The cultural significance of this kind of development is enormous. For the carrying on of the cultural traditions the special leisured class will no longer be necessary. The whole population can take part in its development. So much for the fears of the intellectuals that Socialism will destroy liberty and culture.

## **Religion**

The Prosecution, with unequalled hypocrisy, have singled out our opposition to religion as the text for a sermon to the people of India on the danger, if the revolution is successful, to "the God of the Christian, the Jew, the Mohamman and the Buddhist" and even to "the God of Hinduism". The British bourgeoisie are well known to be intellectually more backward than those of any other advanced country, and are still to a large extent steeped in superstition. But we do not think that it was because of any religious respect for the gods of the Mohammadans, or the Buddhists or of Hinduism that they have helped to maintain these religious systems in full vigour. Indeed the policy of Imperialism,

so well described by a certain Lieutenant Governor of Assam as "taking Islam as its favourite wife", does not speak respect for these deities

The policy of Imperialism in India, as we have pointed out previously, has been so far as possible to prevent the cultural advance of the people of India, and to keep them tied by the bounds of mediaeval superstition, so that they may more easily and patiently be exploited, and may at periods of political crisis be incited to fight among themselves on religious grounds

It is clear to the most superficial observer that religion in India serves as a weapon of immense power in the hands of Imperialism for resisting the struggle for freedom. It has been used as yet only on a small scale, against the reformist movement of the bourgeoisie. As the mass revolutionary movement develops we can be sure that it will be used for more vigorously, as the terrible riots of February, 1929 in Bombay, which were directed against the workers' revolutionary movement, will testify

If only on this ground it would be our duty to point out that religion is objectively a reactionary force. But the matter goes beyond this. In countries where the ruling class cannot or does not stir up communal trouble, or otherwise directly make use of religious institutions for its political purposes (if such a country exists) religion is a bar to the progress of the people. It is an intellectual obstacle to clear and scientific thinking. It obscures class differences. It enjoins obedience and submission to the oppressor in this world as the price for emancipation in the next. It is "the opium of the people"

This was realised by the bourgeoisie in its early days and in several countries the bourgeois class rallied to the fight against feudalism with the slogan of "Freedom of thought" and even open atheism. But on establishing itself as the ruling class it was confronted with the necessity of keeping the proletariat quiet and had to institute the reign of superstition once more. Napoleon who consolidated the rule of the French bourgeoisie after the revolution, is responsible for the remark that "religion teaches the poor man that poverty in this world is the best passport to luxury in the next"

Industrialism, and technical progress generally, have a marked effect in destroying superstition. Religion is now characteristic mainly of agricultural countries. In the advanced countries the growth of industrialism has had such a wide-spread effect in destroying religion among the working-class that the bourgeoisie have had to resort to special means to keep it alive. They have launched "popular" religious, "democratic" religious sects and even semi-revolutionary demagogic types of religious propaganda such as "revivalism" and the "Salvation Army".

In the face of this open use by the bourgeoisie of religion for counter revolutionary purposes, and its general obscurantist effect we cannot but oppose it. We do not disguise our opposition to all religions, and we cannot allow religious propaganda or the open observance of religious practices, by any Communist.

But we recognise that it is not the central fact of the present situation. We know that religion will not finally disappear for a very long time after the establishment of Socialism. We are not concerned now primarily with anti-religious propaganda, though we do not exclude it. We combat religion mainly by pointing out its reactionary role in political and social affairs, and its historical roots in exploitation and the subordination of class to class. We resist and expose the efforts of Imperialism to utilise both religious prejudices and religious institutions etc. for its own ends. We demand the complete separation of the educational apparatus from the control of religion. But we recognise first the necessities of the political struggle in the present period. We do not refuse co-operation with individuals who hold religious beliefs or even preach religion. We consider the economic and political struggle the important question, to which questions arising from religion must be subordinated.

Lenin stated the matter thus (P 1489, "Lenin uber Religion" page 20)

The explanation of our programme includes necessarily making clear the true economic and historical roots of religious confusion. Our propaganda necessarily includes the propaganda

of atheism.....but we must not fall into the error of considering the religious question abstractly, idealistically, irrationally, apart from the class struggle, as is often the case with radical bourgeois democrats. It would be bourgeois narrowness to forget that the pressure of religion upon mankind is only the reflection and product of the economic pressure within society. If it is not enlightened through its own struggle with the dark forces of Capitalism, the proletariat cannot be enlightened by pamphlets or any propaganda. The unity of the real revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the construction of a paradise on earth is more important than the unity of the understanding of the proletariat in regard to the paradise in Heaven." This is our policy in regard to religion in the present stage. When the revolution is accomplished however, a new phase will be entered. Then we shall put into force our demands for the complete separation of the educational apparatus from religious institutions, and the cessation of all support by the State for religion. And we shall conduct an active campaign of enlightenment for freeing the masses from religious prejudices. But we shall not persecute religious beliefs. Lenin emphasises (P 1489, page 12) that ".....injury to the feelings of religious believers is to be carefully avoided, as this leads only to the strengthening of religious fanaticism."

And: "Each man must be completely free to follow any religion or subscribe to no religion."

Contrary to the allegations of the bourgeoisie, this policy has been followed in the U.S.S.R. The correct policy of the separation of the Church from the State etc., has been followed and religious instruction to children has been prohibited. The Church, with other property owners, has been deprived of its land etc. But beyond this religion as such has been left alone, Priests and members of the Church hierarchy have of course been treated like other people in regard to their political activity. The old Russian Church was closely connected with the State and the Police organisations, and most of the members of its upper ranks were firm supporters of the old regime. So far as they actively

supported counter-revolution they were dealt with like others. The so-called 'persecution' of religion went no farther than that.

We can cite for example the following quotation from Mr W J Brown now ex-M P ("Three Months in Russia" pages 58, 59)

So the Bolsheviks by newspaper, by poster, by study circles and so on do their best to destroy religion. But while this is the policy they permit and indeed enforce, the fullest liberty to the adherents of all faiths—Christian, Mohammadan and Jew alike to practise their faith. The churches are open. Anywhere in Russia you may go to church when you please (although to the Westerner it is not an edifying spectacle) and the priests can preach what they please, so long as they do not incite the people against the Government.

Innumerable other observers have testified to the same effect. The 'persecution of religion', like so many other stories against the policy of the Bolsheviks is merely a piece of counter-revolutionary propaganda, and an example of the unscrupulous use which the religious beliefs of the masses are put to by the bourgeoisie.

### **Bourgeois Morality**

The Prosecution have quoted Marx's statement that from the point of view of the proletariat "law, morality and religion are so many bourgeois prejudices. And similarly our attack upon bourgeois morality has often been used by the defenders of the bourgeoisie to give the idea that Communists are completely regardless of constraints of all sorts and will plunge the world into a state of unrestrained licence.

Our attack upon bourgeois morality is first of all an attack upon the bourgeois use of morality as an ideological means for waging its struggle against the proletariat. The great 'moral principles' which the bourgeoisie habitually and necessarily neglect themselves, they enforce against the proletariat with all the authority of religion and the power of the law. Thou shalt not steal—the fundamental doctrine of bourgeois "morality" is necessarily disobeyed by every bourgeois, every hour of his life. The bourgeois exists by stealing surplus value from the workers.

More, as Marx has shown in the last part of Volume 1 of "Capital", the process of "primitive accumulation", whereby all later large scale capitalist development in England was rendered possible, was a process which cannot by any means be dismissed as merely technical robbery. It was open, bare-faced, illegal, violent robbery on a huge scale of the land of the peasants which went on over a period of more than three centuries. The relationship of India to British Imperialism provides a similar case. The British imperialists claim that India is in "debt" to them to the extent of about £ 700 or £ 1,000 millions. Yet as we have quoted previously from 1757 to 1814 the British bourgeoisie robbed India of £ 1,000 millions. Even now this debt is paid off by the Indian masses to the British bourgeoisie about once every 6 to 8 years, according to our previous calculations. Yet the "debt" remains, and the very suggestion that India should repudiate it is met with transports of moral indignation.

We therefore reject the bourgeois doctrine "Thou shalt not steal". But we do not advocate that when the workers are hungry they should indulge in petty theft to remedy it. This will provide no solution. We want one great mass theft of all the property which the exploiters have stolen from us—we want the "expropriation of the expropriators". This will solve the question once for all and render "Thou shalt not steal" a precept which none will be tempted to infringe, and which will consequently be forgotten.

The position is the same in other matters. The bourgeoisie, who habitually and necessarily kill and use violence against the proletariat, have the audacity to preach "Thou shalt not kill". The bourgeoisie who preach sexual morality practise the exploitation of women, and draw profits from prostitution. The bourgeoisie who preach "Thou shalt worship the Lord by God" are to a considerable extent non-believers themselves. The bourgeoisie who systematically lie to the public in their advertisements, their press, their education, their diplomacy, who base their law and their "democracy" on the permanent lie of equality, would prevent their class enemies in the name of truth, from assuming false names and using false addresses.



THIS is bourgeois morality and that is why we reject it. As the system based on robbery will be destroyed by a gigantic act of robbery, and a society then established in which no robbery need or can be committed, so the other principles of bourgeois morality must be exposed and destroyed before a new proletarian morality can be set up.

### **The King**

The question of republicanism which has come up in this case several times must also be considered in the light of our general conception of social evolution. If this is grasped, it will be possible to understand our amusement at being charged with conspiracy to "deprive the King of his sovereignty". The King is already an anachronism in our view. Kingship is characteristic especially of the later stages of feudalism and the earlier stages of the growth to power of the bourgeoisie. At the period of the decay of feudalism and the consolidation of national States, the King, representing objectively the interests of the bourgeoisie, plays a progressive part. Such was the position, roughly, of Amanullah in Afghanistan. As Capitalism progresses, however, the King becomes an increasingly reactionary force. He is a product of feudalism, and can hardly escape from that influence. The typical absolute monarch, in the period when kings really wielded power, was a representative of the interests of the nobility, the semi-feudal big land-owners. It was a king of this kind who was overthrown in the British revolution of the 17th century, and in the great French Revolution. In both these cases republicanism was somewhat premature. The bourgeoisie was still not powerful enough to do without a king, and kingship was restored. But the king's power steadily declined after that stage, with the growing power of the bourgeoisie. Owing to a somewhat uneasy alliance with the nobility on the part of the bourgeoisie, the king was retained up to 1871 (with intervals) in France, up to 1917 in Russia, up to 1918 in Germany, and up to the present day in Great Britain.

But the king is essentially an alien in a bourgeois country and if he is retained he becomes steadily more and more a puppet. The

typical developed bourgeois country is a republic. Consistent bourgeois radicals are republicans. There was in the 19th century a fairly active republican propaganda on the part of a wing of the British Liberal Party, a bourgeois party. It is obvious that all Socialists should be republicans, and it is indicative of the corruption of the Labour and Socialist International that several of its parties, e.g., the British Labour Party, are tolerant of, if not actively in favour of, monarchy; many leaders of the German Social Democratic Party were against deposing the Kaiser in 1918 and so on.

Owing to the peculiar history of Great Britain, the British bourgeoisie have been able to reconcile the monarchy completely with their interests. But that does not prevent them from recognising that it is not a typically bourgeois institution. The hypocrisy of the monarchism of the British bourgeoisie is easily exposed. They show no distress at the non-observance of their supposed principle in France or the U.S.A., (while they do show acute distress at the non-observance of the vital principle of the rule of the bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R.). They openly rejoiced at the deposition of the Kaiser and the establishment of a republic in Germany. They were only less rejoiced at the deposition of the Czar, because they suspected that he was pro-German. In fact there is some evidence that British servants of His Majesty the King of Great Britain assisted in conspiracies to overthrow his Royal cousin, the Czar of all the Russians. (See P. 1176, page 217 "Speech by Lenin"). It was only when the proletariat took power in Russia that the British bourgeoisie elevated the Czar to the position of a hero and martyr, and the monarchist prejudices which had been and are being instilled into the backward sections of the British working-class were used to incite them against the Russian workers.

The British bourgeoisie have no reverence for monarchism as a principle. They keep George V on the throne because he is useful to them, and if at any time they were to come to think that on balance that he had ceased to be of use, they would become as republican as anybody else. Actually there is no chance of this. Assiduous propaganda has made the Royal family popular in

Britain, and even to a certain extent in the colonies, and thus the monarchy is a not unimportant means whereby the bourgeoisie defend themselves and their empire.

Thus solemnly to accuse us of conspiring to deprive the King of his sovereignty is simply a piece of demagogic humbug. If we were accused of what we were actually guilty of namely trying to overthrow the British bourgeoisie, few people could be found who would not sympathise with us.

### **The Law**

If the armed forces, the police, the educational system, religion, morality and national and monarchical sentiments, are all weapons in the hands of the ruling class for maintaining its power, no less is the law and the judicial system. The Prosecution have referred to our view of the matter in pointing out that they together with the court are part of the "White Terror." This is undoubtedly true, and it is important that it should be realised, for the bourgeoisie of Britain succeeds better than most in maintaining the appearance of justice and equality between the classes about its legal apparatus, and at the same time getting the essential work of the defence of its class interests done through the legal machinery.

We have referred from time to time, as have the Prosecution, to the "White Terror," and at this time it would be well to give some facts which will show what is the meaning of this expression. Especially is this necessary as the Prosecution have tried to cover up their own role and the emptiness of their case by associating us with what they have described as the horrors of the Red Terror. Our offence, we have been told, "was against the whole community, and the activity of the accused was fraught with danger not to the Government alone but to the whole of the established order and society."

The effect of the application of our programme in Russia was described in the following term: "These, to me, fantastic theories of Marx were pushed to their logical conclusion with a ruthless brutality which must make every body in the world shudder". We are the Red peril. We are not to be associated with. But who are

the learned gentlemen who make this sort of statements against us? They are themselves the representatives of system of terror which rages throughout the whole world, and not least in India, a terror waged, not in the interest of social advance, but for the preservation of an obsolescent, barbarous, exploiting system, which is acting as fetter upon the progress of the whole of mankind.

This terror has existed ever since the class-struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie began. We have referred to the early struggles of the British working-class, under the Combination Laws, and the later persecutions. The same thing is true of the workers' struggle throughout the History of Industrial Capitalism in Europe, and especially at the points of culmination of that struggle, in the Europe-wide risings of 1848-49, and risings in France in 1871, when the working-class was crushed with merciless ferocity. Professor H. J. Laski says of the latter (The Commune of Paris) (P. 1782 page 37): ".....Because it aimed its main blow at the idea of private property, it was met with a repression, which considering the scale of the struggle was as brutal as any in the historical record". The number of workers killed by the White Terror on this occasion is usually given as upwards of 30,000. The Communards are accused on the other hand of shooting, under extreme provocation, some 60 hostages taken from the Versaillaise.

The terror waged by Czarism against the revolution from its earliest years is well-known. Especially after the events of 1905 this terror reached terrible proportions. "The Illustrated History of the Russian Revolution" (P. 1176) pages 50 onwards—gives some facts which show that as late as 1908 and 1909, thousands were being executed each year.

But the White Terror exceeded all bounds during the revolutionary crisis in Europe after the war. No accurate information is available, naturally, for the war and immediate post-war periods P. 1486 ("International Press Correspondence". 1st March 1928) gives some estimates: In Hungary since the war 15 thousands have been killed in the White Terror; in Germany 15 thousands; in Bulgaria 25 thousands; in Rumania 15 to 20 thousands; in Finland

65 thousands; in the parts of Russia occupied by the Whites, 10 thousands; in China, about a lac. In the period 1925-27 alone, 86,591 were murdered and 12,504 executed by the agents of Capitalism. Further figures are given for the period January to June 1928, compiled from the bourgeois press, which of course normally minimises its own excesses. This table states that in these six months there were killed 10,377; tortured, 13,107; arrested 36,735; banished 356. Of searches of workers' quarters, officers etc., there were 22,394; prohibition orders on meetings etc. 995, suppression of newspapers, books etc.; 478 cases. The judicial machinery was responsible for the following proportion: 907 trials involving 6,003 revolutionaries, of which 3,395 were condemned to death and 30 transported for life. During this period also there were 46 hunger strikes against prison conditions, involving 907 persons.

The particular type of bourgeois terror established in Italy, which also shows a tendency to spread to other countries, is known as Fascism. It is distinguished by the existence of an armed ruling party, the Fascisti, completely dominated politically by the interests of big capital, which constitutes itself a sort of political police, exempted from the ordinary law so far as action against its political opponents is concerned. It may arrest, beat, or shoot at sight, without any untoward consequence to itself, and has established a reign of terror of an absolutely unexampled kind.

It is worth referring also to the case of the United States of America. The U.S.A. is still sometimes held up as an example of freedom and democracy under Capitalism. It has a free, federal republican constitution, founded on the most radical bourgeoisie democratic principles, and is the most advanced country technically and the most prosperous economically in the world. But the ruling class of this capitalist paradise wages a struggle against the working-class of a ferocity which until the post-war period of intensified class-struggle was to be found otherwise only in the colonies. The use by the American bourgeoisie of the law for class purposes and its disregard of its own professed principles of equality and justice, are perhaps the most cynical anywhere to be found. We may refer to the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, which has

been mentioned many times during the proceedings of this case. It is now acknowledged universally that this was a unique instance of deliberate "miscarriage of justice". Although the defence succeeded in breaking down the Prosecution case at all points, the judicial machinery took the matter into its own hands, and insisted, after a trial which lasted in all seven years, in getting the two accused executed.

White Terror is a universal phenomenon under Capitalism, and is found in all capitalist countries. It began with the earliest movements of the working-class for the improvement of its position, and has continued to grow ever fiercer until today. And it can never cease while a class society remains.

It is also found in the colonies. We have referred to the case of China. Java is a country also in which a merciless terror has been and is directed against the revolutionary mass nationalist movement. P. 2365 states (page 479) that between 1923 and 1926 about 3,000 Communists were arrested or deported. During and after the insurrection of 1926, which was partly due to this provocative policy, about 800 revolutionaries were killed, about 10,000 imprisoned, about 5,000 sentenced (from one to 20 years) and 3,000 deported. Nine leaders of the Communist Party were hanged. Since then mass arrests have taken place every few months. We might proceed to give similar facts about all the major colonies, Korea, Indo-China, the Philippines, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Syria and the various other African colonies.

India also has had its feel of White Terror. The suppression of the "Indian Mutiny" of 1857, and the subsequent reprisals were the outstanding example of the ferocity which British Imperialism will use to retain its hold on India. A gruesome account of this period has been given recently by no less stout a defender of Imperialism than Mr. Edward Thompson, in his book "The Other Side of the Medal."

This suppression was carried out without the cover of law. It was a frank open exercise of superior force. To suppress the nationalist and Labour movements since then, the law has been utilised as far as possible. Against the nationalist agitation in the early years of this country, the Indian Penal Code, drastic as it is,

was considered insufficient, and new weapons had to be found. Regulation III of 1818 was revived after decades of disuse. Section 121-A was added to the Penal Code (1908). Freedom of organisation and association was throttled by the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act of 1911. An even simpler means of doing this was later found in the use of S. 144 of the Cr. P. C. In 1911 the Press Act was put into force, to remain until 1922. During the war the 'Defence of India Act' gave more special powers to the Government, and in the period 1915-18 over 1,200 men from Bengal alone, and unknown numbers from other provinces were imprisoned under this Act. Many of these, as is well-known, were tortured to extort confessions.

There is no need to do more than refer to the terror which has continued since the war, combining both legal and extra-legal methods of repression. It reached its high points in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Martial Law regime in the Punjab; in the Chauri Chaura incident in which apart from the reprisals by troops 19 men were judicially executed; and in the suppression of the Moplah peasants' revolt; in the Bengal Ordinance and its 200 victims in 1924; and in the intensified reign of terror in 1930. But throughout the whole period even in the intervals of comparative quiet, there has been a continuous series of prosecutions under S. 124-A, I.P.C. etc., arrests under Regulation III, conspiracy cases against alleged terrorists, Communists and others and shooting of workers on strike. In spite of persistent denials also, there is no doubt that torture is still used upon prisoners to extort confessions etc. (See the statement made to the Court by Dr. Narayan Chandra Roy in the recent Calcutta Conspiracy Case).

So much for the practice and results of the White Terror in India; and so much for its representative in this Court, who have the audacity, in face of their own record, to raise the cry of Red Terror against us.

In its methods of repression, the British bourgeoisie shows, in contrast to many others, a preference for the observance of the law. Cases are by no means lacking in which its agents have exceeded their own legal limits, but these are exceptional. But we contend as we have said, that the law and legal machinery are and

are intended to be a means used by the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the exploited classes. In Britain itself, in spite of all its pretence of fairness and impartiality as between the classes, this is so. Professor H. J. Laski (P. 1782) summarises our criticism of the machinery of justice thus (pages 134-135): "All men are equal before the Courts; but they cannot enforce this equality save by the possession of wealth they do not possess. The humble tenant who seeks redress against his landlord, the servant girl who is dismissed without wages or character by her mistress, the workman injured in the course of employment and refused compensation by an employer who argues negligence on his part, all these are but instances of an inequality before the law which gives the lie to the democratic thesis of equality. The hierarchy of courts, moreover, may well swallow up in the costs of appeal even the pitiful redress the worker has been able to secure. The very fact that special legal institutions have been created which seek to alter the balance the present order maintains, is itself proof that the democratic claim is inadequate". He adds a reference to two well-known books which he admits give "very fairly" the truth in this indictment. The same view of the class nature of the legal machinery is taken by no less considerable authorities than the Webbs ("History of Trade Unionism," pages 625-26), in their account of the Osborne Judgment. They refer to "the bias and prejudice, the animus and partiality—doubtless unconscious of the Judges themselves.....the undisguised glee with which this grave miscarriage of justice was received by the governing class.....", and state: "What lay behind the Osborne Judgment was a determination to exclude the influence of the workmen's combinations from the political field." Thus these authorities admit the class character of the law and the judiciary.

In India probably the most striking instance of the class character of the law is given by its oppression upon the peasantry. Especially in the Zamindari Provinces, the jails are full of poor peasants and landless labourers whose crime is nothing but poverty. Any actual offence committed by them, especially against property, is punished with extraordinary severity. There is a settled policy of weeding out all the men in the villages who



seem likely to lead or organise revolt against the landlords or other exploiting interests, either by entangling them in crimes, or by the simpler method of using sections 109 and 110 of the Cr. P. C., whereby a man can be given one year's R.I. (Three years under S. 110) merely on police suspicion.

This is how the legal machinery works in its day-to-day operations in its ordinary field. When we come to the law in relation to political offences, the balance is weighted even more heavily on the side of the ruling class. Laski says, approvingly (P. 1782, page 127). "In capitalist States the laws of treason and sedition, for example, are, from a communist standpoint, so defined as to make rebellion and urgent criticism of the possessing classes difficult to the point of impossibility." This is the case with the law in Great Britain. As is well-known, the law in India in regard to political offences is far more drastic. We live aside as needing no comment such "lawless laws," as they have been called, as Regulation III of 1818, the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925 and 1930, such pieces of frank class legislation as the Trade Disputes Act of 1929, the "Goonda Acts," and the Public Safety Ordinances, and the various other ordinances put in force from time to time by the Viceroy. These are open expressions of Imperialist Dictatorship. We are concerned merely with the regular law and its operations.

S. 124-A, I.P.C. is perhaps the most striking instance of the means whereby under the cover of the law the ruling class can put its will into effect. Many bourgeois critics have pointed out the looseness of its wording and the freedom it gives to repression. It is administered strictly. In normal times the great majority of political cases are launched under this section. Even in time of crisis, such as the Civil Disobedience Campaign, it is so useful that it is still widely employed. Only a few years ago merely theoretical advocacy of Complete Independence was punishable under this section. To state in public the obvious truth, known to everybody, that the Government is responsible for communal trouble, is punishable under S. 124-A, according to the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta. The use of the slogan "Down with Imperialism" was punished under this section in January, 1929, in Calcutta.

Almost equally useful to Imperialism is Section 121-A, I.P.C., an extraordinary provision even from bourgeois legal point of view, which was added to the Penal Code only in 1908. Its most striking feature is the provision, in contrast with the British Law of Treason, that no "over act," or act which is itself of a criminal character, need be committed. This gives obviously the very widest possibilities of repression. The remarks of the Magistrate (Committal Order, page 9) make perfectly clear his belief that mere membership of any organisation having as its object complete independence, and contemplating any degree of compulsion in its attainment, is punishable under this section. And according to the statements of the Senior Counsel for the Prosecution, at many places in his original address, even formal membership is unnecessary; "association" is enough.

Section 121-A, I.P.C. has been used in many cases other than the present one. Particularly notable are those in which the "Muhajirin" coming back from their visits to Soviet Russia have been involved. In all of these cases there was no evidence against the accused except that they had been to Russia. Usually they were arrested immediately on crossing the Frontier so that they had no chance to do anything. Yet most of them were sentenced. Two in 1920 denied that they were Communists, yet they were given one and three years respectively. (P. 1375, "Kranti" 17.9.1927). In 1923 eight were sentenced in exactly the same way, for one to three years. And in 1927 another case occurred of precisely the same type. This time the sentence was five years. The Cawnpore Conspiracy Case of 1924 illustrated again the possibilities of this section. Evidence even of association of the flimsiest character, and practically no evidence at all of steps to carry out the intentions of the supposed conspiracy, was sufficient to give four men four years' R.I. each. The Cawnpore Case was, as nearly as is possible, a case of prosecution for opinion pure and simple.

If Section 121-A, I.P.C. requires any supplementing in its deadly efficacy, this is provided by Section 10 of the Evidence

Act. This enables to be used against any individual on a charge of conspiracy evidence of the acts or expressions of opinion of his associates, which may have been committed without his approval or even his knowledge, if they occur after the commencement of his association. This section seems to be interpreted very widely. Evidence of acts committed before association commences and after it ceases is admissible. There need be no direct proof of association—mere “circumstances raising the presumption of a common concerted plan” are enough to prove conspiracy.

With such legal provisions, repression should be child's play. Yet still further steps have to be taken to implicate people and get them punished legally and constitutionally for breaches of the law. Such are exemplified by the conduct of this case.

### **“Fair Treatment” in the Meerut Case**

We should make clear before beginning to discuss the procedure which has been followed in this case that we are not lodging a complaint. We have no illusions about justice under Imperialism or the possibility of justice between a ruling class and an oppressed class in any circumstances. We try to take advantage of such provisions of the law as seem useful to accused persons, in the full knowledge that any facilities etc. which we may gain thereby will be in the end of no use to us. It has been no surprise to us that in most important instances these facilities have been, by one means or another, denied. But by doing this we are assisting in the more complete exposure of the class character of imperialist “justice”. That is our whole purpose and justification.

Let us take first an incident which by itself suffices to show the character of the trial. In his speech at the Chelmsford Club on June 20, 1929, the Viceroy said, referring to this case, “His Government were convinced with the evidence they had before them that the accused had violated the law of the land,” (“The Leader”, June 22, 1929) and in England he said:

“If the British Government interfered in this case, both he and others of the civil service would resign”. (“Daily Worker”, January 13, 1930).

After this any Judge who had the temerity to acquit us would know what to expect.

**Why at Meerut?**

The first step which the Prosecution took in their campaign was to select Meerut as the place of trial. As we have pointed out in innumerable applications, the grounds on which the Meerut Courts are held to have jurisdiction are of the feeblest. The Prosecution and the Magistrate, in order to justify themselves, have had to magnify out of all proportion the significance of the Conference which is said to have taken place at Meerut. The places where the major part of the activities which figure in the evidence occurred, are Bombay and Calcutta. Such activity as took place at Meerut was relatively of the very slightest importance. Only one of the accused lives at Meerut. Only 8 of the accused are alleged to have visited Meerut at any time, whereas practically all are alleged to have gone to Calcutta or Bombay or both "in pursuance of the conspiracy".

The objects of the Prosecution in selecting Meerut were the same as those which prompted the selection of Cawnpore—again on the very slightest grounds—in 1924. It isolated us from the movement with which we were connected, and separated us from our friends and relatives. It increased greatly the difficulty and expense of obtaining legal assistance. It brought us under 'the most subservient and illiberal judiciary in the country'. And it deprived us of a trial by jury. The Prosecution have been able to put forward in justification of their choice only the fact that Meerut is a "Central place".

We went through the formality of applying for the transfer of the case first to a Presidency Town, Bombay or Calcutta. Under Section 527, Criminal Procedure Code, the Governor-General-in-Council has power to do this. He refused, expressing "regret" and assuring us that "the matter has had full consideration". It may be noticed that the Labour Secretary of State for India was asked to do this in the House of Commons on 15th July, 1929. "No reply was given". ("Pioneer", 18th July, 1929).

We next applied to the High Court at Allahabad in July 1929 for transfer of the Magistrate's inquiry. The Chief Justice in his order laid great stress on the necessity of "leaving in the minds of the

accused the impression that they had had the fairest possible trial", and so forth, but the application was refused.

Later, on the 19th October 1929, during the course of the Magistrate's inquiry we had occasion to apply for the transfer of the case. In accordance with Section 526(8), Criminal Procedure Code, the proceedings at once stopped, to give us reasonable time to move the High Court. We sent our application by post, but before it came up for consideration, the Prosecution had gone before the High Court and obtained an ex-parte judgement, that we had abused the privilege extended to us under this section, and that the case must proceed at once. We protested against this order, and applied that the case should stop until our previous application for transfer had come up for decision. This application was refused. Thus the clear provision of Section 526(8) was disobeyed by the High Court. Even in this petty matter the judiciary did not trouble to observe its own law.

We next applied to the High Court under Sections 526 and 267, Criminal Procedure Code, for transfer of the case to Allahabad for the Sessions Trial, and for Jury. It is interesting here to notice another instance of predecision of the issue by the Executive Government. At the time when our application was before the High Court, the Committal order of the Magistrate was delivered on Saturday, 11th January, 1930. On Monday, 13th January, before the High Court decision had been made, an Extraordinary Gazette issued by the Government of the U.P. announced the appointment of the Additional Sessions Judge at Meerut for this case.

All our efforts for transfer were thus defeated, and the scene of the trial remained at Meerut.

### **Interception of Correspondence**

It is an accepted practice that the correspondence of accused persons with legal advisers should not be tampered with, and especially that its contents should not be known to those in charge of the Prosecution. We never had any illusions as to the way in which this principle was being observed in our own case, and we have from time to time charged the Prosecution with systematically examining our correspondence. They of course

have always denied the charge, with every symptom of virtuous indignation. But the evidence of Mr. Abdul Aziz, ex-Jailor of the District Jail Meerut, (P. W. 138), and Lieutenant Colonel M A Rahman, ex-Superintendent of the Jail, (P.W. 133), show clearly that our correspondence has been passed to the Prosecution for scrutiny.

### **Witnesses from Abroad**

At the end of the Magistrate's inquiry, some of the accused put in lists of defence witnesses which included a number of persons resident in Europe, mainly in England, and in Indian States. During the course of the Sessions Trial an application was made that these persons be summoned by the District Magistrate to come to India as defence witnesses. The District Magistrate refused to issue summons on the ground that he had no jurisdiction to do so. In consequence an application was made to the Governor-General on the 22nd March, 1930, that the authorities at Meerut be directed to issue summons to some of these foreign witnesses; that provision be made that they be allowed to enter the country and to leave again without being arrested; and that while in India they should not be subjected to annoyance by the Police etc. These items were necessary as some of these persons had been named by the Prosecution as "co-conspirators".

The Government replied, on the 17th May, 1930, that (1) they had no power to summon witnesses from outside India, or to direct that they be summoned; and (2) that if such persons wished to come as witnesses, the Government of India could not give any undertaking that passports would be granted to them, or that if they entered India they would not be arrested, "if they had done anything which rendered them liable under the law".

The same accused then applied to the Additional Sessions Judge on the 30th May, 1930, either (1) to summon these witnesses, or (2) to direct the Prosecution to bring them before the Court, or (3) to issue a Commission to record their evidence in England. All these requests were rejected (4th August, 1930). The situation therefore is that the Prosecution could bring 8

witnesses from England, several from French possessions in India and one from an Indian State, while the Defence cannot bring such witnesses.

### **The Campbell Case**

The attitude of the Government is also shown by another, somewhat similar, incident. It had been arranged that a lawyer should be sent from England by the National Meerut Prisoners' Defence Committee for the defence of the case, and that he should be accompanied by Comrade J. R. Campbell, of the Communist Party of Great Britain in the capacity of a political adviser. Comrade Campbell applied for a passport after an agreement had been arrived at with the Indian Office, but after some delay was informed that a passport could not be issued. The Secretary of State for India had reconsidered the matter and decided not to allow it.

### **Propaganda**

In the early stages of the case the Prosecution went to much trouble to conduct a campaign of propaganda in the press against the accused, the movement in India with which they were connected, the International Labour Movement, and especially against the U.S.S.R. The opening speech for the Prosecution was confessedly a piece of propaganda, and was very fully reported and widely published. Many other opportunities, such as applications for bail by the accused etc., were taken by the Prosecution for further outbursts of this propagandist activity. Throughout this time the accused were silenced by their position. When their time came for a little counter-propaganda however, during cross-examination of witnesses in the Sessions Court, the situation had changed. The attitude of the Prosecution had now become one of strict legal property. Nothing was farther from their thoughts than propaganda; and of course the accused must not think of propaganda either. And, without prompting from the Prosecution, the Court itself would usually stop all such efforts by the accused with the convenient doctrine of the "irrelevance" or "inadmissibility" of evidence.

**Bail**

Clear evidence, if any more is needed, of the way in which the judiciary has acted as the dutiful servant of the Executive in connection with this case, is provided by the question of bail. During the first two years of the case, bail applications were made fairly frequently, on behalf of some or all of the accused, but in all cases, except one in which the accused was at the time of application in serious danger of losing his life, bail was refused. It is admitted that the courts have discretion to grant bail in such a case as this. But the main legal point relied upon in refusing bail was that it should generally not be granted in cases in which the offence is punishable with transportation for life. As was pointed out however on behalf of the applicants, cases have occurred, in Peshawar for example, under Section 121A, in which the accused have been released on bail, and none of these cases lasted anything like the length of this case. Further it is the common practice to grant bail to persons accused under Section 124A, offences under which are also punishable with transportation for life.

It is unnecessary to go into the pleas which were put forward by Prosecution, and supported by the judicial officers, that if released on bail we should abscond, that our health is not likely to suffer more in Jail than outside etc. they are obviously shifts which had to be resorted to for the purpose of giving some sort of legal cover to an executive order.

This was obvious enough at that time. It has been made still more clear by the way in which bail has at last been granted to some of the accused. A test application was made by two of us in April, 1931, after the Delhi Pact had been signed and the political tension of the previous year had partially relaxed. Owing to this fact coupled with the carelessness of the Crown Counsel, and the circumstance that they were fortunate enough to agree before a relatively independent and liberal-minded bench, they were granted a conditional bail. This established a precedent and almost all the remaining accused applied also. Only four non-Communist accused succeeded in this Court. When we appealed to the High Court, a full bench was carefully arranged to decide this important question. Their decision was prepared before they



heard arguments, as is shown by the fact that their judgement of several typed pages was ready a few minutes after they had retired for decision. The decision itself was extraordinary. All the non-Communist accused except one (owing no doubt to confusion over the name) and including three who had not applied, were granted bail, while all those of the accused who had declared themselves Communists by conviction, whether the evidence proved their connection with the C P I, or not—were refused. Subsequently the political discrimination shown here has been emphasised in two cases. I was brought back on account of a flimsy technicality, and comrade Ghate who had been released on grounds of health in 1930 was brought in again for the strange reason that his health had not improved while he had been outside.

The effect of these decisions had been in the first place to expose all the arguments put forward previously by the Crown Counsel against our bail. Those who have been granted bail are still charged under Section 121A, which is punishable with "transportation for life", and they are presumably as likely to abscond as ever they were, yet they are released. But on these grounds bail was refused to them as well as ourselves for two years. In the second place, it has been shown quite definitely that bail is withheld or granted not on judicial grounds at all, but solely on political grounds. During the C D Movement, Gandhian nationalists were likely to be a nuisance, consequently they were kept inside. Now that Civil Disobedience has ceased, they are unlikely to cause trouble and they are released. But Communists if active, are even more likely to cause anxiety to the police than previously. Therefore they must still be kept locked up. This is the argument of the police and the Executive Government, and their actions have shown that precisely the same is the argument of the judiciary.

### **Jury**

But probably the clearest test of the "judicial attitude" of those concerned with our trial is provided by the manner in which the question of jury has been dealt with.

We have tried by all possible means to get the benefit of a jury trial, for two reasons. First, because we consider that any jury would see the extraordinary lengths to which Imperialism has had to go in the formulation of its law and in the conduct of the case, in order to convict us, and this would be in our favour. We do not mean that assessors will not see the same thing. But assessors have no power either theoretical or practical, as the Cawnpore Case showed. It is worth-quoting once more the concluding sentence of the judgement of the Sessions Judge in the Cawnpore Case: "Agreeing with two assessors and differing from the third as regards Usmani, agreeing with one assessor and differing from the other two as regards Muzaffar Ahmad and differing from all the assessors as regards Nalini Gupta and Dange, I convict the accused (all).....and I sentence each of the said accused to 4 (four) years' rigorous imprisonment."

And the second reason is that trial by jury is one of the "treasured liberties" of the British subject, which has been maintained for many centuries, and the denial of which, after all possible means of obtaining it have been tried, is itself a very revealing fact.

We applied first to the Magistrate on 23rd July, 1929. He rejected our application with the remarks: "There was a mass of documentary evidence in this case which it would be impossible to expect a jury to cope with..... In a case of this length there would certainly be minor casualties in the ranks of the jury and each one would necessitate an adjournment or retrial and the case would never end.....justice would be hindered and not forwarded by giving a jury in this particular case."

His next argument was still more remarkable, from one whose job it is to uphold the dignity and impartiality of the law: "Man was a political animal, and there was a popular tendency to look on this trial as a political one. It would be almost inevitable that the opinion of each jurymen would be swayed by his political leanings either for or against the accused and the verdict, if it was conclusive at all, would quite possibly have little relation to the merits of the evidence.....justice was more likely to be done in a case like this by a trained judge than by a jury."

We appealed to the Sessions Court against this decision on 20.11.29, with of course a negative result. But the judgement was even more remarkable. The Sessions Judge admitted that Chapter 33 of the Criminal P.C. applied to this case. And from this it follows that we are entitled under the law to have a trial by jury. But, for essentially the same reasons as those given by the Magistrate, he considered that the ends of justice in this particular case would be better served without a jury.

Our application on the matter to the High Court had the same result. The Chief Justice in his judgement of 27/1/30 continued the extraordinary attitude of his subordinates. He began with the strange statement:

For some reason which I do not very clearly understand, the defendants are set upon having a jury and they think they would derive some advantage from it. But if in a trial by jury the evidence were to go to the length that all or some of the thirty-one accused had adventured upon a conspiracy of which the ultimate object was the overthrow of the Government of His Majesty the King Emperor by armed revolution (which is alleged), that is a matter which might be regarded very gravely by a jury, and they might not take a clear and judicial view of the evidence." (We are thankful to his Lordship for his anxiety on our behalf.) He repeated the remarks of his subordinates about the "superhuman" task for a jury represented by the case, and rejected the application.

In this application the point was stressed that those accused who were residents of Calcutta and Bombay, (that is the majority of the accused) are being deprived by being tried at Meerut, of the right to a trial by jury which they normally enjoyed by reason of their place of residence. The Chief Justice had already replied to this point in July 1929 as follows: "That makes no impression on me. The alleged fact is that they conspired at Meerut, and if in truth they did so, they must in the absence of special circumstances, be content to be tried by the procedure ordinarily applicable to the accused at Meerut". And he simply repeated these words on this occasion. It is a very neat trick of

His Lordship's. But we must point out that out of the 23 accused from the cities of Calcutta and Bombay only two are alleged to have "conspired" at Meerut.

The claim was also made that the presence of three British subjects among the accused rendered Chapter 33 of the Cr. P.C. applicable to this case and that therefore a jury must be given. This was rejected, on the grounds that it was not "expedient in the ends of justice" that this provision of Chapter 33 should be applied.

The last point has given rise to inferences. It is supposed that the three European accused were raising some "invidious claim" for jury, which would apply to them and not to the other accused. This is not the nature of the provision made under Chapter 33. A jury given under this chapter would try all the accused.

As a last resort we appealed through the Court by telegram to the Government of U.P. early in February 1930, to declare this district a jury district, for the purpose of this case, under Section 269 Cr. P.C. The result was negative. Again it should be noticed that the Labour Secretary of State for India in reply to a request in the House of Commons on the 15th July 1929 that he should see that jury was given in this case replied that "the matter was now before the Court and he did not propose to interfere." ("Pioneer" 18th July 1929). The fact that the case was before the Courts was irrelevant. He had constitutional power to "interfere" through the Government of U.P. but he did not avail himself of it.

We have stated that we started on this long course of applications and appeals in accordance with a definite policy. We were sceptical from the beginning of obtaining any advantage from them, and the record which we have just given will show that our scepticism was completely justified. But we wished to undertake them only for the purpose of exposing more completely the class character of the judicial machinery and the nature of the "liberties" enjoyed by British subjects. We feel that we have achieved this object fairly thoroughly.

## **Conclusion**

This case is an astonishing one in many respects. It has been a never-failing source of surprise to even those who like ourselves have long been forced to adopt an attitude of complete cynicism as to the ways of Imperialism and its agents.

Its very inception was obviously not a consequence of any "crime" on our part, even under the all-embracing Section 121A. Much of the evidence brought forward dates from period up to four years before our arrests.

The case was launched, as we have pointed out, primarily as a means of attacking the rising working-class movement. But this is true not merely generally. It applies to the specific situation in the early months of 1929, the time of our arrest. At that time the cotton industry in Bombay was in a state of crisis. The millowners' offensive of the previous year had been defeated. They were preparing for their second attack on the workers' conditions, which opened with the publication of the Fawcett Committee Report in April 1929 and developed to a second general strike in the same month. The arrest of those accused who came from Bombay was decided upon, not because of any infringement of any law on their part but in order to attack the Bombay mill workers' conditions.

Similarly in regard to Bengal. The jute industry was working up for a crisis principally over the shift question, which was precipitated by the announcement at the end of 1928 that a change would be made in about 50 p.c. of the mills simultaneously in June 1929. A strike involving about 2 lacs 50 thousand jute workers actually occurred in August 1929. The Bengal accused were arrested in order to prepare the way for this attack.

There were other minor reasons which prompted the authorities to launch a case at that time, also having no connection with any crime of ours. One purpose was to frighten the bourgeois nationalists (who had at the Congress at Calcutta in December 1928, given their ultimatum to the Government), with the dangers of appealing to the masses, owing to the risk of letting loose the class-struggle. This was clearly announced by the Viceroy in a speech in January 1929.

And no doubt the case was found very useful in providing the Conservative Party in Britain with propaganda material for use in the General Election which took place two months after our arrest. The value of "Red Scares" had been shown in the General Election of 1924.

It may be noticed at this point also that the Government had obtained in advance the implied assent of the bourgeois nationalist politicians, who in the debates in the Legislative Assembly on the Public Safety Bill had expressed their agreement with the policy of trying the communists in the courts.

The question of "crime" on our part did not arise. We had to be sacrificed to the economic exigencies of the capitalists of Bombay and Calcutta and the political needs of the big bosses who rule in London.

Some sort of case had therefore to be fabricated, on what evidence was available or could be found in the searches. Much of this evidence is of an astonishing character, even if we bear in mind the strange vagaries of the Indian Penal Code and the Evidence Act. Apparently the object of putting in a large part of it was to overwhelm the court and the accused with its volume, for weight it has none. A considerable part of the prosecution evidence consists of letters of a personal or business character, exchanged among the accused; particulars of Trade Union or similar activity of the usual type; and standard economic and political works, such as Marx's "Capital" Vol. I, Marx's "Wage Labour and Capital," Bukharin's "Historical Materialism," (twice), Marx's "Civil War in France" (1871), Marx's "Class-struggles in France 1848-51" Engels' "Peasants' War in Germany," Marx's "Wages, Prices and Profits," Marx and Engels' "Communist Manifesto" (1848), and so on.

The case is indeed an astonishing one. But its most striking feature, which all detached observers have commented on, is the absence from the evidence of any acts on the part of the accused of an illegal character. The Prosecution have done their best to give the case an atmosphere of criminality by emphasising "cryptic correspondence," "assumed names" and behind it all the lurid gleam of "Moscow gold". But even they have not claimed

that any of these things is illegal. Cryptic correspondence and the like are perfectly legitimate means, which any sensible person would adopt, to avoid the inquisitorial attentions of the police. To receive money even from the E.C.C.I. itself is no crime. The Prosecution evidence is that money came to us from abroad quite openly through the usual channels. The police could have confiscated it en route if they had thought its receipt illegal. (Actually they did send some money back which was intended for us. But in this they broke the law, not we). We are accused of "fomenting" strikes, of "capturing" Trade Unions, of "debauching" the minds of the Youth, the other sinister actions. But none of these things is illegal. In short it is admitted (among others by the home Member to the Government of India, in the Legislative Assembly in March, 1929) that none of our actions in themselves have been contrary to the law.

This aspect of the case, as we have said, has caused some perturbation among those who have not yet realised what Imperialism is, and still retain their nineteenth-century beliefs in our "traditional liberties." A letter appeared in the "Manchester Guardian" of 10th December, 1929, signed by Messrs. H.G. Wells, H.J. Laski, R.H. Tawney, and the Rev. Walter Walsh, repeating the suggestion that this was a "strike-breaking prosecution", protesting against the refusal of bail, the refusal of jury, and the choice of locality for the case, and demanding that we should be allowed "the elementary rights of British citizens on trial".

The "Manchester Guardian" itself in its issue of the 9th December, 1929 had published a leading article on the subject which described as the most disturbing feature of the case the fact that there was no accusation of "over acts" but merely a "vague charge of 'conspiracy to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty'". It suggested that the procedure of the case should be modified a little, and that the decencies should be observed rather more strictly, for the sake of the credit of "British Justice". And on the 12th December the Archbishop of York wrote to the Secretary of State to a similar effect.

The key to the puzzle of course is to be found in the nature of modern capitalist society and its development. These good

gentlemen do not realise the “legal” resources at the disposal of Imperialism in India. Like the bourgeois radicals and democrats they are, they are still thinking in the terms, already decades out of date, of a freedom “broadening down from precedent to precedent”. They have no conception of what happens as a matter of course in those two-thirds of the world which are subject to imperialist domination. They do not realise that in its last crisis Capitalism is tightening its hold, striving with ever greater brutality to save itself by more and more merciless exploitation and oppression of its subject populations. Section 121A, is no survival from the barbarous past. It was added to the Penal Code during the enlightened twentieth century.

But there is no such excuse for the “Labour” Government. They knew perfectly well what they were doing. They were carrying on the policy of Imperialism in all its details in every sphere. In particular they carried on this case. It is worthwhile to state clearly what this means; to what the Labour Party and the Labour Government committed themselves by allowing this case to proceed.

(1) They discarded all the doctrines of bourgeois liberalism in regard to the freedom of the individual; and his rights: it is “more expedient in the ends of justice” for people to be tried by a member of the imperialist bureaucracy than by a jury of their peers.

(2) They made republicanism illegal. As the “Manchester Guardian” in the leading article before quoted remarks:

“If to aim at depriving the King-Emperor of his sovereignty is itself a crime then all active republicans are criminals, and the secessionist party in South Africa (to choose an illustration cited by Mr. Benn) (Mr. Wedgwood Benn, later Secretary of State) are indubitably guilty of a seditious conspiracy.”

(3) They admitted that to aim at the establishment of the rule of the workers and peasants was a crime.

(4) they contradicted in deeds their own principle that is permissible, in a country in which there is no democratic machinery, to overthrow a despotic Government and establish a democratic Government.

(5) They prohibited the practice of militant Trade Unionism.



(6) They prohibited working-class internationalism. The list could be extended, but these are the most prominent items in a record of which any Social-Democratic Party could be proud.

There could be no better argument for revolution and the Communist policy than this. Our superior critics of the Labour Party, who have always assured the masses that theirs is the more excellent way, both to Socialism in Britain and to freedom and democracy in India, have proved in action the value of their policy. They have proved that opportunism in theory means treachery and counter-revolution in practice; that to attempt to overthrow Imperialism by using its own machinery is to transform oneself into a jail or and hangman in the service of Imperialism.

We apply these lessons not only to Britain but to India. We remember that the Nehrus and Gandhis of China and Egypt have shown themselves exact parallels to MacDonald and Wedgwood Benn. The experience of this case confirms us in our belief that the only possible policy is an uncompromising revolutionary policy, which shirks no issues, and shrinks no issues, and shrinks from no implications, but is out by any possible means, legal or illegal, to overthrow Imperialism and smash it; that is, the policy of the Communist International.

The statement that I have delivered from the beginning up to this point is the considered and agreed statement which I am authorised to make on behalf of 18 Communist accused, namely, G. M. Adhikari, Ajudhya Prasad, Gopal Basak, B. F. Bradley, G. Chakravarti, S. V. Ghate, D. Goswami, K. N. Joglekar, P. C. Joshi, M. A. Majid, S. S. Mirajkar, R. Mittra, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shamsul Huda, Sohan Singh Josh, P. Spratt, Shaukat Usmani and myself. It is intended to deal from a Communist point of view with all the important political questions raised by the Prosecution in the case and to present them and the Court with the considered and united opinions of the majority of the accused on these questions and on the case as a whole. The other accused mentioned will later submit an application to this effect.

## Examination of B. F. Bradley in Meerut Conspiracy Case

*In the Court of R L Yorke, I C S , Addl Sessions Judge Meerut*

In the case of King Emperor versus P Spratt and others

Examination of B F Bradley accused under section 342 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, made before me R L Yorke Addl Sessions Judge at Meerut on the 24th day of June 1931

My name is Benjamin Francis Bradley, my father's name is Francis George Bradley, I am by caste British, 33 years of age, by occupation Journeyman Engineer, my home is at 4 Elmsdale Road Waltham Stow, Essex, England, residence in India is not fixed

Q You heard your statement in the Lower Court P2601 read out on 16 3 31 Is that statement correct?

A Yes

Q The following evidence relates to your foreign correspondence and connections so far as they are alleged to have anything to do with this case P 1012, 1008, 651, 672, 1671 1672 1673, 2424 and 2425 series, 1520 to 1523, 1862, 2188, 2422 and 2423 series, 2426 and 2427 series, 1524 to 1529, 1827, 1504 and 1505, 2428 series, 674, 673, 654, 2181, 2408, 2401 series 2405 2402, 1860, 2432 (2), 1670, 1861, 2412, 1857, 1856, 2182 1813 1826, 1815, 1812, 1667, 1668, 1858, 2187, 1816. 2406, 1817 2411, 1814, 2414, 2115, 1669, 1659, 2413 series, 2416, 2415 1660, 2417, 1802, 1514 and 1515, 527(1), 1809, 2404 Have you anything to say about this evidence?

A Before I go into explanation I want to give some justification it may be called

These documents in the main that are put to me are desired to connect me with certain organisations abroad Before I answer the

question in detail about each individual document I would like to pass some personal remarks. It has been claimed by the Prosecution and they have done considerable propaganda on this score, that a Communist is something foreign to the working-class and the working-class movement. I shall do my best in what I have to say to refute this suggestion. Born of a working-class family I began to work in a factory at the age of 14 and after a short while I settled down to learn the Engineering trade. The Great War was declared when I was 16 years of age. Immediately the War propaganda was started in the Capitalist Press of all belligerent countries, informing the workers of their countries of the terrible atrocities that were being committed by the forces of the opposing countries. Added to this, further propaganda was put out that we in particular were fighting for the freedom of small nations, that native workers would join the fighting forces our jobs would be safe, our wives and relatives would be looked after and so on. Promises were made by the British Government to Ireland, Egypt and India that if they would assist the Home country in this particular struggle, their aspirations for freedom would be satisfied when the War was over. In fact the whole world was to be entirely changed and Britain was going to be the champion of freedom for all countries.

In 1916 I fell a prey to this propaganda, although partly realising the class-struggle that was going on around me. I joined the Navy to participate in this game of murder on behalf of British Imperialism. During the 2½ years that I spent on board my warship a monitor, on active service on the Belgian Coast, I witnessed the spectacle of men being blown to pieces, or terribly maimed and crippled for life. From my side I assisted in sending over shells that would blow to pieces or maim other men in the like manner, men who were workers like myself and who had no quarrel with me or who had never done me any harm. This was War, the Imperialist War for "freedom". It is impossible for me to adequately describe the wholesale mass murder and ruthless brutality that went on during the 4 years between 1914-1918.

We have heard a lot of talk from the Prosecution, in this case about violence, lurid accounts of the "Red Terror" are drawn with

the help of bourgeois publications such as the foolish little pamphlet published, "Bolshevism, the dream and the fact," by Edmond Chandler The late Mr. Langford James said in his opening address when he was speaking about the Russian Revolution " fantastic theories of Marx were pushed to their logical conclusions with a ruthless brutality which must make every body in the word shudder" According to the Crown Counsel the Communists have as their sole object the annihilation of the bourgeoisie, the aristocrats etc and if they have their way the whole world will be running w/n blood That this should come from the mouthpiece of British Imperialism from those who only a short while before had been applauding and participating in a war, the biggest mass slaughter in the history of the world only goes to show their rank hypocrisy

Who inaugurated the bloody reign of violence and murder most brutal between 1914-1918, a period of terror and suffering unspeakable? Little Belgium and the killing of an Arch duke somewhere in the middle of Europe were only the excuses 10½ million workers were slaughtered during this period of mass murder inaugurated by Capitalism, among whom was a younger brother of mine Many more millions today are existing throughout the world mental and physical wrecks as a result so much for the combatants Thousands of women and children were blown to pieces by the air raids carried on by the British, German and other forces All this was done to make the world safe for exploitation Did the Capitalists of any of these countries that participated in this War keep their promises to the workers whom they had used as cannon fodder? No. Did British Imperialism keep its promises to Ireland, Egypt or India? Of course not These promises were kept in the form of the Black and Tans for Ireland, gun-boats for Egypt and for India Jallianwala Bagh and the years of ruthless repression

Along side this Imperialist War went on the class war The prices of food stuffs and necessities rose out of all proportion during the war. To attempt to keep pace with this increase in the cost of living, the workers asked for increases in their wages

Every increase however small had to be wrung from the Capitalist class, workers were even forced to strike at the very time when the commodities that they were producing were of dire necessity. While at the same time the Capitalists were heaping up their huge fortunes from the super profits at the expense of the blood that was flowing in Flanders and elsewhere. Unfortunately no party existed then to give the proper lead to the workers. In 1917 the Russian Revolution took place and the workers of Russia successfully established themselves in power. This was the lead that we workers had been looking for, and this was the menace that the Capitalists feared most. The Armistice was signed in November 1918 and after this a strenuous effort was made by the Capitalists of all the countries to force those of us who had joined only for War service, to continue and go and fight the Russian workers.

In many cases there was a revolt against this and the workers in the Navy, Army and Air force demanded that they should be sent home, they had had enough of the Capitalist War. I was demobilised in 1919 and returned to my trade but I soon found that I had been demobilised from the ranks of the Imperialist War into the ranks of the class War to face the general attack that had been begun by Capitalism to snatch away from the workers all that they had wrung from the Capitalists during the war period. This was the way that the Capitalists were keeping their promises to the workers. Thousands upon thousands of workers were being demobilised every day into the ranks of the unemployed. The war had brought poverty and misery to the workers, but in spite of this Capitalism was not satisfied, hundreds of millions of pound were still being spent to attempt to crush the workers' state in Russia. It was because of these experiences, plus my own as a worker employed and unemployed that I became class-conscious.

In 1920 I helped in the "Hands off Russia" campaign, which was successful in rousing the workers of Great Britain, prevented the 'Jolly George' a ship loaded with munitions for the counter-revolutionaries in Russia from leaving the London docks, and finally in getting the British troops withdrawn from Russian soil. In 1921 I was forced on to a long spell of unemployment, of

course I was only one of an army of some 2½ millions of unemployed workers who were paying the price for tolerating the system of Capitalism. After sometime I managed to sign a contract to come to India as an engineer, and in October 1921 I came to India for the first time. My employer on this occasion being the Government of India and my stay here then lasting about nine months. During my stay I visited among other places Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Bombay. It was during this short sojourn in India that I was brought into direct touch with the conditions of the Indian workers and I was extremely impressed by the terrible poverty and distressing conditions under which the working-class of India were forced to exist. The only satisfactory description that can be applied to these conditions is that they are revolting. However, I was unable during my stay on this occasion to render any assistance to these workers. In 1922 I returned to England to face the vicious attacks that were being made against the conditions of the workers there. Now in what I have to say I want to emphasise the fact that I speak as a worker; a worker from the metropolis of the largest Empire in the world, a worker who participated in the class-struggle in Great Britain, who has since the War undergone periods of unemployment, and was a witness and has been a victim of during those years the ruthless drive that has been made by Capitalism upon the conditions of all workers in that country. This includes Miners, Railwaymen, Textile, Woollen, Transport and Ship Building workers, etc. etc. including my own trade, engineering. The example of my own trade is typical. The average wage of a Journeyman Engineer in England in 1920 was £4-5s a week, this wage has been reduced by continuous attacks until it has reached the sum of £2-18s-10d which is the approximate wage paid to a Journeyman Engineer in Great Britain today. Not satisfied with this, engineering employers are staging a further attack upon these even reduced conditions. Whatever the workers have gained in respect of hours of work and wages during the pass 20 years is being taken away

These facts coupled with my personal experience in India during 1921-1922 forced me to take a deeper interest in the class-struggle and to realise the truth of what Lenin said referring to

Marx's proposal for "the separation of Ireland . . . as the only possible form of Irish liberation which must be included in the programme of the British Labour Party". It was:—"a means of obtaining the freedom of Ireland, of hastening the social development and emancipation of the British workers; for the British workers would never become free themselves so long as they assisted (or even permitted) another nation to remain in slavery."

We workers of Great Britain more than any other section of workers must learn this lesson and take an interest ourselves in the question of the struggle of the workers in 'our own' colonial countries and define our attitude in relation to the same, the reason being that the ruling class of Great Britain owns the largest colonial territory in the world, that somewhere about four hundred million human-beings are being forcibly kept under the yoke of British Imperialism, out of which over three hundred millions are existing in India. It is the proud boast of this ruling class and its supporters that the British Empire because of its vastness is the "Glorious Empire upon which the sun never sets" and in regard to India it is described as "the brightest jewel in the English Crown". But only those who have visited such places as India can fully realise and appreciate the true significance of these boasts. One is struck by the stark poverty that is seen everywhere among the masses, the miserable wages paid for labour, the terrible housing conditions known as coolie lines, or Improvement Trust Chawls, to say nothing of the mud huts and the thousands upon thousands whose only shelter is to be found on the road side. In short the conditions can only be described as hideous. On the other hand the British Empire during the years of its growth provided for the ruling bourgeoisie cheap raw material, markets for their produce and fruitful spheres of investment for their surplus capital, which in turn has provided these British bond-holders and share-holders with enormous profits, and in spite of the world trade depression since 1920 the Board of Trade, England, estimated that the income of the British Capitalists from abroad had risen from 180 million pounds to 270 million pounds. Along side this should be taken into consideration the fall in

prices during this period, and at least 60% of this total represents tribute extracted from the "Glorious Empire" for British Capitalist bond-holders. During the years 1915-1924 the shareholders in Indian Jute industry extracted profits and reserve funds totalling three hundred million pounds sterling comparing this amount with the number of workers in the industry which is about three hundred thousands and estimating for these ten years it means that the profit per worker extracted was one thousand pounds and it follows for one year one hundred pounds from each worker, while the average wage paid to the worker is £4-10s per annum. Dividends range in this industry from one hundred to three hundred per cent. In Malaya the Rubber Capitalists make about £109 per annum out of every worker, the wages paid to these workers amounts to £15 per annum. The same story can be told about all the parts of the Empire, Africa, Egypt etc., but we are at the moment mostly concerned with India. I may say here that what I have explained is what I meant when I said in my speech P. 2240 "I have no love for the Empire though I have fought for it.....the present Empire is constructed on exploitation"

How does the question of the Indian workers concern the workers in Great Britain? It is not necessary for me to go into detail about how the British came to be in India, but I will just mention that some 200 years ago they came here as merchant adventures to plunder the country and from this adventure was founded the British East India Company. From the question of ordinary direct plunder came the question of a market for British goods. India was to be plundered both ways from within and from without. Everything went well for the plans of British Capitalism up till the war, the accumulated loot principally from India provided the basis for the rapid development of Industrial capital in Great Britain. British products and manufactured goods were increasingly being imported into India under protective measures to safeguard the market, with the disastrous effect upon the Indian handicraft industries and destroying the village system.

This was followed by another phase of exploitation, the export of British Capital principally as Government loans and also for



investment in plantations, mines and industry. Export capital is the basis of Imperialism, during the last quarter of the 19th century colonial expansion went on a pace and Imperialism was consolidated. It was during the closing period that the British bourgeoisie acquired a monopoly of foreign Trade Markets and Britain came to be known as the workshop of the world. It was during this period that the upper strata of the workers of Great Britain benefited slightly by this means of exploitation, and on occasions some Trade Unionists even have joined their particular country giving assistance in the exploitation of the colonies. However Great Britain did not have it all its own way, so even before the war the supremacy of Britain was being challenged and the war dealt her almost a death blow.

There was rapid development of certain industries in India from the period of the war up till 1920. This development was in fact against the policy of Imperialism and allowed only because the war required it. The home country had to turn all its resources to produce war material and munitions. Not only did the bourgeoisie of Great Britain have to turn all their resources to the business of wholesale murder to attempt to maintain their supremacy, but they drew from the colonies much cannon-fodder and munitions also it was during this period that a spurt was made in the development of certain industries in India and the boom period for them began. This boom period however brought no relief to their workers, the boom reached its highest point in 1920 and the highest peak of wages never even reached the increased cost of living. The boom period of the War was to Capitalism simply a period of intensified exploitation, and provided an opportunity for the Indian bourgeoisie to develop some industry at least; they used this opportunity as much as they could.

In 1920 British Imperialism began to reassert itself, Lancashire wanted back its cotton market; Dundee wanted back its jute market, Vickers, Armstrong-Whitworth and other engineering concerns wanted back their markets and so on. The British capitalists demanded that the policy towards the colonies should be reviewed and put on a proper imperialist basis. All the means

within the power of British Imperialism were used to prevent further industrialisation and in India after 1920 it has come almost to a standstill. The measures adopted were as follows:

In 1920 the Imperial Bank was forbidden to give credit to any industrial undertakings. In 1922 Railway construction plans to the extent of 1500 million rupees orders for this were given to an English firm in spite of the demand of the Indian bourgeoisie that the orders should be placed in India. In 1923 orders for 3132 Railway cars were given to English firms, and we have seen the wholesale retrenchment that has followed in the Indian Railway Workshops. In 1926-27 the export duty fixed at 12% in 1919 on leather and skins (for the purposes of creating a leather industry) has been reduced to 3% in this way the raw material will be exported. During the same year the rupee exchange was set at 1/6 even though the industries in India were against it and demanded an exchange at 1/4. Instead of increasing the Tariff duty on iron and steel, as demanded by the Indian bourgeoisie, preferential tariffs were fixed for British iron and steel goods. The increase in the coal tariffs demanded by the Indian bourgeoisie was rejected in order that the South African Coal Industry should be protected. The same year approval is given by the Government on the export of capital from India to Brazil. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in effect advises that Indian capital should be directed to agriculture. In 1930 a bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly ostensibly to give protection to the Indian Cotton Industry, but in reality as the result of some compact between Lancashire the Government and some Bombay mill-owners. This bill was calculated to deal with two questions. one Japanese competition and the other to give Lancashire a preference in the Indian Market. The debate on this bill in the Assembly was extremely interesting in so far as it exposed the struggle between the British bourgeoisie and the Indian bourgeoisie for the monopoly to exploit the Indian Market. This new Cotton Tariff Bill was passed in the Legislative Assembly in March 1930 and showed the inner contradiction of Imperialism in the struggle for exploitation.

However, in spite of all this it has not prevented industries already developed in India from entering into frantic competition with the home industries and this has resulted in what we have seen, the vicious attack upon the conditions of the workers. This brought out a sharp contradiction between Imperialist Britain and India.

The power of the British ruling class over their Empire following the war was considerably shaken in spite of its apparent increase in size and the position today, 12 ½ years after the termination of the War is to say, the least, extremely critical. For today not only has she to meet foreign competition but the dominions also challenge British exports in the World Market. In the attempt to save their supremacy the Capitalists make a drive against the conditions of the workers and after the drive had been successful in Britain it is reflected by a drive against the workers in India and other colonial countries. It is my intention to show that the struggle of the British workers is common with the struggle of the workers going on in India today, and in doing so I should be able to explain the character and meaning of some of this correspondence that passed between myself and persons in England. To do this I will compare the position of the workers in certain industries in Great Britain with the position of the workers in those industries in India.

Although I am going to draw comparisons between the conditions of workers in certain industries in Great Britain and India it does not mean for one moment that I believe the ruling class of Britain are allowing industrialisation of India to take place. Nowhere in India today do we see any sign of a development of the production of the means of production. Some industrial development is bound to take place in spite of the resistance of Imperialism, but this development is controlled and kept within certain limits by their tariffs etc. India can produce such commodities as cotton goods, boots and shoes or anything for consumption under these conditions, but she must not be allowed according to Imperialism to produce the means of production.

Export of capital to India is turned into such channels that will serve the best interests of British Imperialism, the building of railways and the means of transport, docks, and grandiose schemes of irrigation with the direct object of maintaining India as an agrarian appendage of British Imperialism. To hold before the eyes of the masses of India the perspective of expanding industries under Imperialism, capable of making concessions and raising the standard of life of the masses is sheer humbug. Imperialism's role in India has been and will be to impede the development of Capitalism.

In the first place I would take the Cotton Industry. This being the first and most important of British export industries that is of cotton goods, and show how this industries has been affected since the war. While yarn and cloth exports in 1912 formed 21 per cent of the total British exports they only formed 18 per cent in 1927 (Cotton Master Spinners' Report). The raw cotton consumption in the five leading European countries has fallen from 10.3 million bales in 1913 to 8.1 million bales in 1926. The fall of the British consumption during this period being nearly 30 per cent. At the same time the cotton consumption in India and Japan has risen from 3.7 million bales to 4.8 millions. Thus showing that the production of cotton goods was passing to places where cheaper labour was employed.

The reduced standard of the workers quickly affects the cotton industry and it is shown as follows. The decline in the consumption of cotton goods in Great Britain is by 33 per cent as compared with the consumption in 1912. The reason for this reduction by 1/3 in the home consumption, a reduction which still continues, is the continued attacks which have been made by the employers upon the workers wages during the post-war years. Therefore the decline in consumption of cotton goods cannot only be attributed to foreign competition. The reduced standard of the British working-class during the last 10 years since 1920 is shown by the striking figures recently given by Mr. William Graham, the President of the Board of Trade in which he shows that the annual income of the workers during this period has fallen by 700 million

pounds sterling. This landslide in the income of the workers of Great Britain is due entirely to the wage reduction enforced by the employers, it follows that the demands for goods will be reduced by this colossal amount. At the same time the huge army of unemployed must be taken into account.

In respect of exports of cotton goods this argument can be used even more forcibly in relation to the pauperised Indian masses, India being one of Britain's principal markets. Whereas Britain supplied India with 85.67 per cent of its requirement of yarn in 1913, it supplied only 30.92 per cent in 1926 (Cotton Master Spinners's Report). Then the department of Overseas Trade in its "Report on the conditions and prospects of British Trade in India, 1927" points out that the majority of Indian consumers have only a very small margin of means, and again the Indian Tariff Board's Report of 1927 shows that Indian consumption of cotton piece goods per head has fallen by more than 14 per cent comparing 1913-1914 with 1925-26. Mr. H. P. Mody, Chairman of the Bombay Mill Owners' Association in a statement issued on May 7th, 1931, points out "that the loss of Lancashire Trade was not due altogether to the boycott but it was to a great measure the result of crippled purchasing power of the country". This of course takes into consideration both imported and Indian produced cotton piece goods, and shows conclusively that the reduced purchasing power of the Indian workers is a fundamental factor in relation to the British export decline. The state that the Lancashire Capitalists have got into, is shown by the frantic and continuous press propaganda that is going on today.

What "solution" does Capitalism bring forward to solve this state of affairs? Its only "solution" is to further intensify the present contradictions and aggravate the situation as it is already by further reduced wages and longer hours-rationalisation. And this "solution" we have seen applied not only to the workers of Lancashire but also to the workers throughout India. The whole history of the Cotton Textile workers both in India and Lancashire since the war has been one of struggle to prevent worsened condition. This struggle has been carried on under the name of 'rationalisation'.

To show what is in the minds of the capitalists and the common interests of the workers I would use the words of the capitalists themselves. The following extract is taken from an article published in the "Manchester Guardian" even as far back as January 1928 and runs as follows:

"Why then has this trade been lost? There are several main reasons, but the greatest is this—yellow labour and brown have attacked white; 2s. 6d. a day has attacked 10 shillings a day, and has done it wearing the arms and armour of 10 shillings". How do these interesting individuals, the capitalists, proposed to face up to the situation? Why, by reducing the 10 shillings to 2s. 6d., as the article says in continuation. But if these individuals are in a position to carry through such a proposal, would the 2s.6d. remain at 2s.6d.? Of course it would not. Those of us who have been associated with the Cotton Textile workers in India know that the whole history of these workers has been one of struggle to maintain even the meagre 2s. 6d., and to prevent their already miserable conditions from being worsened.

The Bombay Textile workers have borne the brunt of these attacks, and strikes have taken place at one or other of all the textile centres throughout India, every year up to 1930 as I will show. The Ahmedabad Textile workers in 1923 were forced to accept a 15 per cent reduction in wages after a two months' strike in an attempt to resist. In 1924 the General Strike took place in Bombay involving over 160 thousand workers and lasting for three months, this was an attempt on the part of the workers to resist wage reduction that was being enforced by the Bombay Mill Owners' Association, their excuse being trade depression. The workers again in the case were forced back to work suffering the reduction. Not satisfied with this the Bombay mill-owners decided to make a further attack on the workers' conditions in 1925; this time they wanted a reduction in the wages of 11½ per cent; the workers again struck work and the strike lasted about for four months. At this time the Government of India came to the assistance of the mill-owners and suspended the Cotton Excise

duty and because of this the 11½ per cent reduction was not enforced. In 1926 and 1927 strikes continued to take place in Bombay, Madras, Cawnpore and other textile centres. At the same time as these attacks were being made on the Indian workers similar attacks were being made on the workers in Lancashire. In 1927 the Federation of Master Cotton Spinners' and the Cotton Spinners' Manufacturers Associations of Lancashire were preparing for their big drive and putting forward the demands for the reduction of wages and lengthening of the standard working week. This was simultaneous with the drive that was being prepared against the Bombay Textile workers. This drive matured in 1928 when Bombay mill-owners came forward with their rationalisation scheme, further reductions in wages and increased hours of labour. This time the employers wanted to speed up and at the same time reduce the workers' wages by 12½ per cent. It is of interest to note that this attack of the Bombay mill-owners coincided with the drive of the Lancashire employers against the Lancashire Textile workers and at the same time as the suggestion was made that the 10 shillings of the British workers should be brought down to the 2s. 6d. of the Eastern workers.

D/ 21.6.31.

If the British workers submit to the attack then it does not end there, because the Indian workers are also attacked. Since 1920 the Textile workers of Lancashire have had to face serious unemployment and the workers have been forced to work short time. In 1921 out of 577,710 insured workers, 104,669 were unemployed, in 1926 out of 575,100 insured workers 144,018 were unemployed and in June 1930 there were 234,700 insured persons unemployed in the Cotton industry, that is 42.2 per cent. (Ministry of Labour Gazette figures.) This is typical of the situation that the workers have had to face during the post-war years, and at the same time the system of short time is operated, and this is not done with a desire of the employers to save the workers from the horrors of unemployment but to ensure that a sufficient number of skilled workers remain in the industry with the hope that trade will revive. At the same time it is used to break

the resistance of the workers in further attacks. In Bombay in the years 1929-30 the position of the unemployed was quite as bad, out of some 160,000 workers in the industry about 60,000 were unemployed and in 1930-31 of the same number of workers about 40,000 were unemployed.

In 1929 after the Fawcett Committee report on the 1928 strike the drive against the Bombay Textile workers was increased and a General Strike took place lasting about three months. As it will be seen by the continued attacks made by the Bombay mill-owners since the war the workers were not in a position to resist and they were forced back to work defeated. In the same year the long talked of attack upon the Lancashire Cotton workers matured and on July 29, 1929 the Master Spinners and Spinners and Manufacturers Federation, locked-out over five hundred thousand Lancashire Textile workers. The demand of the employers here was for a direct reduction of the current wages of 12.82 per cent together with an increase of the working hours from 48 to 52½ plus the usual speeding up. This lock-out was one of the most important steps of the employers in the process of rationalisation. The employers' justification of this attack was to cheapen the cost of production and so enable them to re-enter the world market with competitive prices. This justification is easily exploded by the simultaneous attack upon the Indian Cotton workers. In this drive against the Lancashire Cotton workers the Cotton master received the valuable assistance of the Labour Government, they with the assistance of the Trade Union officials took part in this struggle to betray the workers. The Ministers of Labour of the Labour Government refused to grant unemployment benefit to the locked-out workers, stating that it was against the law to relieve workers who are in dispute. In this way the Labour Government supported the employers against the workers, further, assistance was given by the arbitration machinery which was set up by the Government. The result of arbitration was the forcing of a 6½ per cent cut in the wages of these workers.



The Bombay Textile workers were defeated in their attempt to resist the attack of the mill-owners to worsen their conditions and increase the rate of exploitation during their last General Strike. The argument used by the Bombay mill-owners was that reductions in the cost of production were necessary to meet competition. The Lancashire Textile workers were also defeated and forced to accept worsened conditions and reduced wages, so the position in respect of competition remained unchanged. Is the defeat of the Bombay Textile workers the signal for a new and further attack upon the workers in other countries, especially in Lancashire? If the argument of the cotton masters of Lancashire is to be used then the reply is 'yes'. And so the vicious circle goes on. The very significance of the position is exposed by the simultaneous attack launched upon the Lancashire workers and the Bombay workers who were resisting still further worsened conditions. It is not a question of competition at all. It is a question of the scramble of profits on the part of the employers, and a frantic attempt to stabilise a system that is crumbling before their eyes. The cotton workers of Lancashire cannot and will not agree to be condemned to the fate of having their wages and conditions levelled down to those of the Indian workers, even if the conditions and wages of the Indian workers were to remain stationary. But a defeat for the Lancashire workers is a signal for an attack upon the Indian workers, and a defeat for the Indian workers means a further attack upon the Lancashire workers. This is the logical conclusion, and the vicious circle. By this means it is clear to the workers both British and Indian that their struggle is common against one common enemy and that they stand or fall together.

The above arguments can be applied to many other sections of workers, the Jute workers for instance, I have already indicated the enormous profits made from the Indian Jute Industry. The struggle of the Jute workers is typical, the Jute Industry of Bengal was started entirely by British capital, the first mill was registered in 1872, the Fort Gloucester Mill. For many years the Indian Jute Industry has had the monopoly on the world market. The two

important factors that induced the capitalists to develop the Jute Industry in India were, the good supply of raw jute at the door of the factory and the other was the enormous supply of cheap labour. These conditions were pitted against the conditions effecting the Dundee Jute Industry where comparatively better conditions were enjoyed by the workers. Serious rivalry between Dundee and Bengal was felt as early as the year 1894 and this brought a vigorous protest from the Dundee Chamber of Commerce as follows:

"Against the working of women and young persons twenty-two hours a day and a children fifteen hours a day, as against ten hours a day work in Dundee." On receiving this protest the Secretary of State for India ordered an enquiry to be made on the spot, but nothing was done. The power of the capitalists was too strong and of course it was British capital. This rivalry naturally continued and after the war several new mills were floated in India, including one, the Cheviot Mill whose plant consists of the machinery brought from Thomson Brothers, Angus Works, Dundee, by Andrew Yule and Co. in the year 1920. The machinery from this Dundee Mill was dismantled, transhipped and re-set up in India to be worked by cheap labour. It is little wonder that the packing and shipping of this machinery caused considerable surprise and resentment among the unemployed Jute workers of Dundee. Here we have a glaring example of Imperialism using cheap labour not only for profit making, but to pit against and keep down the conditions of the workers in Great Britain. In spite of the terrible conditions of the Indian Jute workers the history of their struggle during the post-war years has been similar to that of the Cotton workers, and from the owners side it has been one of unscrupulous exploitation. Here again the struggle of the workers of Dundee and Bengal is one.

Perhaps a more striking example of the use of cheap colonial labour to reduce and keep down the conditions of labour and also to replace the comparatively better paid labour of the workers of the metropolis is that shown by the use of such labour as seamen Under the decision of the National Maritime Board of Great

Britain the wage of the merchantile marine seaman is fixed at £ 9 equivalent to Rs. 120/- per month, with free food in addition, as against the average wage paid to the Indian seaman which is Rs. 26-8 per month. Because of the cheapness and abundance of Indian labour it is increasingly replacing British labour.

A further example can be given in respect of the workers in the Iron and Steel Industry. In the subsidised Iron and Steel Company of Tatas at Jamshedpur the rationalisation drive has been going on for some years now and we have witnessed the resistance put up by the Indian workers there during 1928 and 1929 against worsened conditions. Exactly the same struggle is going on in England today owing to the rationalisation policy pursued by the English Steel Corporation, and in consequence of this in February, 1930 the Penistone (Yorks) Works of Messrs Cammell Laird and Company were closed down and one thousand workers were thrown out of work. The plant which had been erected at a cost of one million pounds is being dismantled showing that the closing down of this place is not a temporary measure. Cammell Laird and Co. were today getting the same production with 3900 workers as they previously has to employ 12,000 workers to produce. Again in July another steel works was closed down. This firm belonged to Guest Keen and Nettlefolds, a well-known company at Dowlais the closing down of these works threw out of employment over three thousand workers

In 1928 over 600,000 railway workers in Great Britain were forced to accept a wage cut of 2½ per cent and again this year the employers are out to enforce a further cut.

During the last six or seven years serious attacks have been made upon the Indian railway workers. In 1930 the workers in the Woollen Industry of Britain had a very severe wage cut imposed upon them. The Mine workers in an industry which used to employ about 1,500,000 workers in Britain are perhaps the hardest hit. The history of these workers since the War "to make England fit for heroes to live in" has been one of continuous struggle, today their wages are below starvation level, the poverty, distress and unemployment among these workers is

indescribable. While these workers are struggling in Britain the Indian Mine workers are toiling under slave conditions

The same picture can be applied to the Engineering Industry. The Engineering employers say, if we can reduce the price of our commodities we may be able to compete once more in the world market. In the Ship Building Industry we have a very striking example, according to the Secretary of the Boiler Makers Society in March, 1930 the number of workers employed in ship building has been reduced by 1,54,377 workers since 1920 owing to rationalisation, and against this fact the tonnage of shipping in Great Britain has considerably increased during these years. In fact the same story can be told about the workers in all Industries, the guaranteed hour, day, and week which was won in the struggle of 1919 and 1920 is to be snatched away and wages are to be ruthlessly cut. This is the position in Great Britain today after ten years' of continuous large scale depression in almost all industries. In spite of the continuous wage cuts there is mass unemployment. The Minister of Labour Returns for April 1931 show 2,639,633 registered unemployed in Great Britain. This is the highest figure since the war. Starvation stares these workers and their dependents in the face, there being no hope of their being absorbed within their industry. Is not such state of affairs as I have outlined sufficient to impress the minds of the British working class? Such is the callousness of the capitalists the methods that they adopt to drive down the conditions of the workers which were my bitter experience and which left a profound impression upon my mind.

The whole outline that I have tried to give from a workers viewpoint shows the correctness of the definition of Imperialism, of which the British Empire is a part, as given by Lenin that Imperialism was the period of capitalist decline or dying Capitalism. Although I have only dealt with British Imperialism and directly with Great Britain and India showing the class nature of the struggle in both these countries, the chronic state of trade depression is not only confined to Great Britain and the countries under the domination of British Imperialism. The present

economic crisis is directly a crisis of the capitalist system as a whole, in America, Germany, France etc. there are huge armies of unemployed workers. In America, the most powerful Imperialist power today, we find in United States of America in January, 1931 there were 6,030,000 unemployed. These figures are given by Mr. Lamont, Secretary of Commerce U.S.A. The capitalists of those countries are making similar drives against the conditions of the workers in those countries. In short the capitalist world as a whole is struggling in the grip of a tremendous world crisis under which the very contradictions of the system itself are being exposed and because of which the system must collapse. It is from this situation that the working-class of Britain have got to define their attitude in the class-struggle and especially towards the struggle in the colonial countries within the Empire.

The British capitalists use the argument that it is competition from the workers in such countries as India and China with their low wages and their long working hours that is under cutting the British products. But who is it that is keeping down the conditions of the workers in those countries? It is the same British capitalist, who forces these workers to toil under disgusting circumstances for all hours, 52 weeks in the year, in return for a wage that can only be described as a miserable pittance not sufficient to provide them with enough food. It is the same British capitalist who is imposing rationalisation at home and at the same time planning new schemes for further exploitation of India and other colonial countries. British workers who assist or even permit this state of affairs to continue are in reality signing their own death warrants. The task of the British working-class is to fight for the liberation of the colonial masses and for the conquest of political power at home. It is for us British workers to consider how best to achieve this. The General Strike of 1926 showed the right direction and also showed that the British workers were just as militant, courageous and determined to fight as any other section of the working-class throughout the world, at the same time it exposed the treachery of the reformist Trade Union leaders. These leaders have since been enforcing upon the workers a policy of class

collaboration under the name of "Mondism" and propagating "industrial peace" while Capitalism goes on steadily exploiting the workers

The British Labour Party have from a policy of deception and reformist illusions gone over to a full blooded and whole-hog support of Imperialism at the same time propagating such quakery as "Imperial preference" and "Empire Marketing" The Labour Party has had sufficient time and opportunity to show its intentions, having operated as His Majesty's Government on two occasions, and on both occasions it has been successful in showing its Imperialist character In respect of matters directly concerning Great Britain the role of the Labour Government has been one of full-fledged support to all measures that the capitalists have brought forward to reduce the standard of life of the working-class, in their attempts to save themselves from the chaos within which they were being submerged

The Labour Government has freely used all the capitalist State machinery to prevent resistance on the part of the workers, during the Transport Workers' Strike of 1924 they introduced the Emergency Powers Act, the military were called in as blacklegs and on all other occasions the military and police have been freely used and strikers have been imprisoned Unemployment relief was refused to workers locked-out by employers to enforce wage reductions Workers who have been unemployed for a period are refused unemployment insurance benefit with a view to forcing these workers by starvation to accept labour at any wage the employer likes to impose. Further the Labour Government are responsible for imposing task work upon the unemployed The Government machinery is used to setup arbitration courts through which the wage reductions and rationalisation policy that the employers desire to impose are passed on to the workers Further anti-labour legislation such as the Trade Disputes Act remains law and the Labour Government even use it This class collaboration policy of the Labour Government is endorsed by the Labour Party In other words the Labour Party has come forward to save Capitalism from itself, to save Capitalism from this chaos

which in reality means saving the super profits for the capitalists. Earlier, I gave figures which showed that the annual income of the British workers had been reduced in ten years by 700 million pounds sterling per annum. Mr. William Graham, President of the Board of Trade, supplemented this statement by pointing out that during the same ten years the national income on the other hand has not fallen but it remained stable at 4,000 million pounds a year. By this co-operation with Capitalism and the enforcement of rationalisation upon the workers the Labour Party is enslaving the workers and intensifying the contradictions which are so apparent today.

Forced by poverty and unemployment assisted by these Labour Imperialists, British workers are driven into the military forces in preparation for an attack upon U.S.S.R., a new war, and to be used as tools in the hands of this gang of ruthless exploiters to maintain India and other colonial countries in forcible subjection, by the use of machine guns, tanks, poison, gas etc. etc.

The policy of the Labour Party in relation to the Empire has been such that even the late Lord Birkenhead was able, when the Tories came back into Government after the first Labour Government of 1924, to say that they were merely carrying on the policy of the last Government. When the Egyptian Nationalists made certain moderate demands from the Labour Government, the reply was the despatch of warships to Egyptian ports. When the tribesmen in Iraq refused to bow to the might of Britain, aeroplanes were sent and they were bombed. The then Labour Minister, the late Lord Thomson took a delight and full responsibility for this affair, saying when referring to the incident that "the effect of our air attack was appalling. 700 tribesmen seized with panic, fled into the desert, where hundreds must have perished from thirst.....". Nothing is said of the number of human beings that were killed by the bombs during the raid. In respect of China full support was given by MacDonald Thomas and Co. to the bloody Imperialist policy followed there, the ruthless repression of the workers' strike movement in 1925, the massacre of workers in 1926 and the British gun-boats and troops

that were sent to China in 1927. Even the I.L.P. owing to its subservience to the Labour Party would not co-operate with the C.P.G.B. in its "Hands off China" Campaign. The imperialist policy followed by the Labour Party in respect of India we know only too well, they were responsible for the introduction of the Bengal Ordinance in 1924, their co-operation on the Simon Commission; their record of ruthless repression from 1929 to 1931, wholesale shooting and arrest of the Indian masses, the shooting down of strikers; the numerous ordinances taking away whatever slight vestige of freedom there was, and finally the part of the Labour Government played in the recent negotiations on behalf of British Imperialism in delivering over the Indian masses to a further period of intensified exploitation, poverty and misery

D/- 29.6.31.

To justify this policy of Imperialism the Labour Party talk of establishing a "British Commonwealth of Nations" on the basis of the British Empire. They talk of 'socialising' the Empire. How do they propose to carry this out? With bombs, warships and troops or by the murderous policy that they have applied to India. The foundations of the Empire, as I have shown, are based upon ruthless exploitation and it is upon this basis that they propose to build their "British Commonwealth of Nations". If this is so then the Labour Party programme for 'socialising' the Empire means in other words socialising exploitation and slavery. Such terms are only used by the Labour Party to cover up the fact that they are simply carrying out the policy of the British ruling class in relation to the gathering and rising colonial revolt especially in respect of India. No Party truly representing the working class of Britain can be reconciled with such a policy because the workers of Great Britain are equal victims of the same Empire.

The policy of the British Labour Party is the same as the policy of the L.S.I., or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the policy of the L.S.I. is the same as that of the British Labour Party, being the most important factor in this International. As a matter of fact it is hardly correct to call it an International because it is only representative of sections in European countries and has



little or no connection with the colonial countries. It is because of this make up that the policy of the L.S.I. in relation to the colonial and semi-colonial peoples bears the mark of a body prepared to carry out the wishes of Imperialism. In other words the L.S.I. is in fact a pro-imperialist body. After the War the Labour Imperialists of European countries felt the need for an International to more effectively assist the capitalists in carrying out their policy of reconstruction. At the same time it was necessary to supplement the work of the League of Nations and the I.L.O. A more important reason for the bringing into being of the L.S.I. was the necessity of some sort of International to divert the workers' attention and to stem the rising tide of revolutionary upsurge that was threatening to engulf the world. For this reason the L.S.I. with its present constitution was established in 1923.

In respect of the colonial and suppressed Nationalities the policy of the L.S.I. has been completely in keeping with the policy of Imperialism. Where the strong hands of Imperialism was applied the L.S.I. would justify and support, where the situation necessitated the Imperialist power concerned talking of "reforms" or a "measure of self-Government within the Empire" that also could be accommodated. In other words, the policy of the L.S.I. is elastic and accommodating, and can be adjusted to fit in with the particular need of the imperialist policy of Capitalism at the moment. At the same time through its resolutions it denies the elementary principle of national self-determination and shuts its eyes to the relationship between the oppressed colonial countries and the oppressors. Refusing the right of independence and adopting the principle of education towards self-Government (the White Man's burden) which means accepting the position that Imperialist domination is a good thing and denying the fact that the masses in the enslaved countries are in bondage to the Imperialist country. It would support the idea of the Indian people having self-Government (but within the Empire). On the other hand, it repudiates the demand for complete independence.

It is little wonder that the L.S.I. receives every support from the Imperialist powers and that the Imperialist oppressors give every assistance to member of this international to visit their colonies

and to establish connections and carry on propaganda. In recent years several envoys of the L.S.I. have come to India, Purcell, Shaw, Brockway, Brailsford, etc, etc,. British Imperialism sees in the L.S.I. a useful ally, a body that will kill two birds with one stone, on the one hand to head the British and other European workers off the revolutionary path and assist the reconstruction of Capitalism and worsen conditions for the workers, and on the other hand to propagate to the colonial masses that they could not do better than remain with in the Empire. Such a policy is designed only to bind the shackles of Imperialism more firmly on the colonial masses and also upon the workers of the home-country.

I have made it clear in what I have already said that the interest and struggle of the working-class of both Britain and India are common, that the rationalisation drive against the workers in Britain coincided with a similar drive against the workers of India, and that they both stand or fall together under the attack of British Imperialist Capitalism. The maintenance of British Imperialist power depends upon the workers of Britain being held as under from the workers of India and the other colonies, to prevent them from realising their common interest and common struggle. To talk of building Socialism on the basis of Empire exploitation is to propagate an idea as ridiculous as it is mischievous and those who do so and support this idea are the agents of those who desire to perpetuate these loathsome conditions of exploitation, robbery and murder.

As against these organisations which are betraying and handing the workers over to Capitalism and Imperialism for further exploitation stand the Communist International and the R.I.L.U with their unhesitating support for the colonial revolutionary movements. The Communist International stands as the one organisation of the revolutionary working-class of the world linking up the workers on the basis of the class-struggle. This position is made quite clear in the theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the colonies and semi-colonies passed at the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International (Section 8)

"The revolutionary emancipatory movements of the colonies and semi-colonies more and more rally round the banner of the Soviet Union, convincing themselves by bitter experience that there is no salvation for them except through alliance with the Revolutionary Proletariat and through the victory of the World Proletarian revolution over World Imperialism. The Proletariat of the U.S.S.R., and the Workers' movement in the capitalist countries, headed by the communist International, in their turn are supporting and will more and more effectively support in deeds the emancipatory struggle of all colonial and other dependent peoples; they are the only sure bulwark of the colonial peoples in their struggle for final liberation from the yoke of Imperialism."

The above principle has been given effect to on more than one occasion, the assistance rendered to the Chinese in the struggle against World Imperialism: the assistance given to the colonial populations in Syria and Morocco by the French workers under the banner of the Communist Party, the assistance given to the Indian workers during their strikes, and so on.

The only party in Great Britain that realises this and carries on the correct policy in relation to the situation is the Communist Party of Great Britain, whose policy it is to rally the workers of Great Britain on the anti-Imperialist Front, whose active propaganda and demonstrations were able to bring the workers of Britain to the true position and so prevent troops and ammunition being sent to murder the Chinese workers and so drown the gathering Chinese workers' revolution in blood. The vigorous campaign that the C.P.G.B. has carried on to bring pressure to bear upon British Imperialism and to rally the British workers to the support of their fellow workers in India, who are struggling for freedom. The clear and unequivocal denunciation of the political and economic slavery imposed by British Imperialism upon hundreds of millions of workers in India and throughout the British Empire, and finally the clear cut demand for the withdrawal of troops from India and the colonies and the recognition of their complete Independence. On this basis the C.P.G.B. is forging the link that will unite the struggle of the

British Proletariat with the struggle of the colonial masses against Imperialism, and lead them to overthrow this great organisation of exploitation and oppression as represented by the British Empire. It is our aim, the aim of the working-class movement to overthrow Capitalism and to substitute in the place of the Dictatorship of the Capitalists the Dictatorship of the Workers.

It is under this lead of the Communist Party that we workers in Great Britain are beginning to realise that a defeat of the workers on one front means that the capitalists will be in a much better position to turn their attention to other fronts. The success of the working-class of Great Britain can only be effected by the formation and consolidation of a United Front between the Proletariat of Britain and the Proletariat and masses of peasantry of India. The victory of the working-class in advanced countries and the liberation of the oppressed Nationalities from the yoke of Imperialism depends entirely upon this United Front. Imperialism has itself made conflict between exploiters and the exploited International. Marx expressed the position clearly in his Manifesto of the Communist Party when he says, "The workers have no country". They have one common enemy that has imposed the conditions under which they exist today, and which they must unite to destroy.

Whilst at the same time I realise that revolution will not come in India through the advice given either from Great Britain or Moscow, but nevertheless it will surely come and the cause of it will be the object misery and slavery created by the very oppression of British Imperialism itself, which is today steadily impoverishing and worsening the conditions of the masses. But the day of their freedom from these chains of slavery will be hastened by unity of action with workers who are weltering under the whip of the same slave master. By this I mean that the emancipation of the Indian masses from British Imperialism will weaken the capitalist exploiters, who are today battenning on us British workers, their freedom, their helps forward the British workers in their struggle for emancipation.

This can only be successfully achieved by the linking up of the revolutionary working-class movements of Britain and India along with the revolutionary working-class movements throughout the world on the basis of the programme of the Comintern. The Communist International alone is mobilising the wide masses, not only in capitalist countries but throughout the world for the final struggle and overthrow of Imperialism.

In view of the position of the workers of Great Britain an exceptionally heavy responsibility devolves upon their shoulders, a responsibility that they are certainly not going to shirk. The fact that I am in the dock today charged along with my Indian comrades shows that we, workers in the metropolis, are beginning to realise more and more that it is our interest to see that the domination of our own bourgeoisie over the workers in the oppressed and colonial countries of the Empire within which we live must be abolished once and for all.

In spite of the fact that the watchdogs of British Imperialism in the intelligence and other organisations, the best trained and most pernicious in the world, are watching all roads leading to India, preventing access to all who might assist in the growth of the class-consciousness of the Indian Proletariat, guarding India with its millions of human beings like some precious sacrifice that has got to be slowly bled white on the altar of the Moloch of capitalist Imperialism, our duty is quite clear. Even the Labour Government has shown that they will not allow militant workers to come to India and have associations with Indian workers. Any worker who is suspected of the "terrible crime" of desiring to help the Indian workers in their struggle is refused a passport as in the case of J. R. Campbell, Tom Mann, etc.

An outstanding instance is given by P. W. 247 Sergeant Littlewood, "A Mr. T. Strudwick came to Bombay. He was detained on board". This was during August 1928 and is the case of a British worker whose passport etc. was in order, but British Imperialism feared that he would be of too much assistance to the Indian workers. So in spite of the fact that his passport was in order he was not allowed to land. Another glaring instance is the

case of Mr. J. W. Johnstone, who attended the Jharia Session of the T.U.C. as a fraternal delegate representing the L.A.I. In this case Mr. Johnstone was served with an order for deportation, he was subsequently arrested at the T.U.C. Jharia and deported. The above instances took place under the Tory Government. I can also give facts of how the reformist labour leaders of the I.F.T.U., act and show how they are prepared to carry out the orders of their Imperialist masters, and thereby keep the workers divided. One case is that of J. R. Campbell who desired to come to India to assist the accused in this case, apparently he came under the category of those who would be likely to give assistance to Indian labour. He was therefore refused a passport by Mr. Wedgewood Benn, the Labour Secretary of State for India. The grounds for refusing the passport are given in a letter from the India Office dated 19/12/29 to J. R. Campbell "That undertaking was given, as is clear from the letters of the 11th and 28th September, from this office at a time when, and on the assumption that the Government of India were enabled by the currency of the Public Safety Ordinance to ensure that any breach of these conditions would be followed immediately by the removal of Mr. Campbell from India. The Public Safety Ordinance has, however, ceased to be operative.....he must now decline to recommend the grant of a passport valid for India". This shows that in spite of the fact that J. R. Campbell was prepared to give an undertaking, Mr. Benn, the Custodian of British Imperialism in India refused to grant a passport to a workers' leader because he could not have him removed from India at the sweet will of the powers that be. This is a part from the fact that J. R. Campbell would have been of immense value to us in conducting our defence in this case.

A more recent incident is that of William Gallacher. as compared with David Kirkwood; both desired to attend the forthcoming Trade Union Congress, both happened to be engineers and members of the same Trade Union but David Kirkwood is a member of the I. L. P., he is to be allowed to come, William Gallacher is a member of the Communist Party, he is refused a passport

We have learnt from bitter experience that had the workers bowed down to arbitrary class legislation, designed to keep the workers apart there would never have been a Labour Movement. We are certainly not going to begin now to bow down to this kind of legislation, or dictation from the capitalists, we defy capitalism to prevent us from linking up with the Indian workers in their struggle.

Whilst it is necessary for us to carry on vigorous propaganda and agitation in Great Britain among the workers there to make them understand what British Imperialism really stands for, it is also necessary that this should be accompanied by concrete assistance such as British workers coming to India to work with the Indian workers and in the Indian working-class movement.

I claim that the only way-out of the present world economic crises is the revolutionary way, capitalism must be smashed and socialism built up from the ruins thereof, upon this must be taken into consideration the position of the British Empire. Either, emancipated by the Proletarian revolution in Britain or by the active participation of the British Proletariat the revolution in the colonies is achieved and there will be found in India, other countries previously hostile to capitalist Britain, countries converted into loyal allies of Soviet Britain. Such an alliance based upon the workers of these countries will provide a sure bulwark against the bogey of attack from American Dollar Imperialism, to which almost all European countries are heavily mortgaged to-day and which is becoming the nightmare of British Imperialism. At the same time it will provide an unsurmountable defence of the Soviet Countries against the forces of counter-revolution.

That the working-class of Great Britain are waking to the fact that their struggle to-day is inter-dependent with the masses struggling for freedom in the colonial countries—especially India—and that for success there must be unity of action, this is becoming more apparent day by day. This awakening is being brought about and led by the C.P.G.B. That I am a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain I admit and I am proud of the

fact. I stand here to-day to register the right of the workers of Great Britain to co-operate with the workers of India in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. In doing so there is no conspiracy, it is open co-operation in the class-struggle against our common enemy, and come what may we are determined, ultimately, to march forward together shoulder to shoulder to our emancipation under the banner of the Communist International.

### **My arrival in India for the second time**

An unsuccessful attempt has been made by the Prosecution to shroud my arrival in India with mystery and to suggest that I came to India under false pretences. The Prosecution (Junior) Counsel said in summing up the case in the Lower Court that "he came like his predecessors or false pretences as an engineer." I do not know why we said this. What they have to support this allegation I do not know. I have been shown several documents, two of which are P. 1008, 1012, which I understand are alleged by the Prosecution to announce my coming to India. I do not see anything at all in the document P 1008 that has any connection whatsoever with me, unless, of course, the Prosecution want to fix on to me the suggestion that 'University fellow refers' to me. I am certainly not a 'University fellow' and I know nothing about the reference. In P. 1012 it says that "an engineer who will be going to Glasgow soon." These cryptic letters of the Prosecution have been developed to a high degree. The fact that I am an engineer became common knowledge, and such a fact could be easily incorporated in a letter. As to the word 'Glasgow' meaning Bombay, this, of course, can only be mere assumption on the part of the Prosecution, there is certainly no evidence to support it. Had I gone to Karachi it would have had to have read as Karachi. I have seen these two exhibits, they were not sent to me and I understand they have not been properly proved. I think Spratt has given a satisfactory explanation and there is no need for me to say any more. I know nothing about them. All sorts of strange and mysterious stories have been concocted by the Prosecution about the arrival of certain persons in India. One Percy Gladding for



instance is mentioned. In the case of this person the Prosecution with all their army of C.I.D. have not been able to produce a scrap of evidence that any-one saw such a person in India. But nevertheless we have been given an elaborate story about him. In respect of my coming to India for the second time I desire to make it quite clear that there was nothing mysterious, and certainly nothing surreptitious about the way I came. I came quite as openly as I came on the first time, my passport which is on record shows this. One of the reasons for which I came to India was to work the agency for a patent tile, an invention of my elder brother. He was also the proprietor of the firm, "The 'Crab' Patent Under Drain Tile Company". At the same time as a Communist, of course, I owed a duty to my class which I was certainly not going to shirk. An opportunity was offered me during the year 1927 to again return to India by my elder brother who wanted to develop the sale of his tiles and I agreed to come to India and to my best in this respect for him. At the same time I saw an opportunity to render some practical assistance to my fellow workers in India; to further study their condition; to be in close contact with them and to participate in their struggle along with them. I seized this opportunity and in September, 1927 I came to India on the P and O boat Ranpura using my own name, my own passport and quite openly.

**Explanation of Money, Private letters and Telegram etc.**

Money:—I have already explained how and why I came to India in 1927. The Prosecution have thought fit to put in as evidence a mass of private letters and telegrams purporting to have been either sent by me or received by me. The main point in these exhibits is that they refer to the question of salary, either that I am asking for it to be forwarded or saying that it has not been sent. All these telegrams and letters are to and from my mother and my brother. Now without any reason whatsoever your Honour is asked by the Prosecution to infer that there is something sinister behind these letters and telegrams, here I may mention that my brother has been cited as a co-conspirator while my mother has

not, no reason is given for this. In spite of all this and on this flimsy inference a Moscow scare is built up, you are asked to believe that Moscow is intriguing and that my mother and my brother, and in fact the whole family are involved in this "Moscow plot". In short, it is alleged that they are in league with me and have been transferring "Moscow money" through certain channels to me.

Then the name of the Workers' Welfare League of India is brought in and the Prosecution counsel has said, without any concrete evidence to substantiate the same, that I was being paid ".....month by month for doing this Communist work of the revolution of India.....", the same allegation is repeated by the Magistrate in his Committal Order. Now as I have already pointed out I was doing business here on behalf of my brother and it is only natural that letters and telegrams dealing with the question of my salary and other business matters should pass between us, that is members of my family. Out of all the amounts mentioned by the Prosecution and alleged to have been received by me all except two were sent either by my mother or my brother. One of these two amounts not sent by them is alleged by the Prosecution to have been sent by one H.P. Rathbone, all that I can say in this respect is that I knew a Mr. Rathbone as a friend of the family and this may be the same Mr. Rathbone. It is quite possible that he was asked by my people to forward this amount to me (P. 1504 series)

P. 1514 series with message "Wire receipt league":—

At the time this money was sent my elder brother was travelling in the midlands around Birmingham and as is usual with persons who are travelling an address to which all correspondence should be sent is fixed. I understood this message to mean that I should send the receipt for this money to a certain hotel in Birmingham which was the headquarters of the Commercial Travellers, Association and also of other organisations of which my brother was a member. Correspondence and material in reference to this matter has been lost owing to the fact that I had been moving about from place to place and then, of course, this was followed by my arrest.

P. 1860: The Prosecution had tried to support their theory that this money was being sent by the Workers' Welfare League and have referred to this letter. The portion which says "I have to thank you for....also for the receipts for the monies the League has been able to collect from the British workers for the strike at Bombay." This is a letter from Potter Wilson to me, now the clue and the explanation to this reference to receipts can be found in P. 1814, a portion of which refers to the fact that the Workers' Welfare League was able to collect from the Amalgamated Society of Dyers, Bleachers, Finishers and Kindred Trades, Lancashire; The sum of £ 100-0-0. This was only of several amounts that the Workers' Welfare League was able to collect to assist the Bombay Mill Strike of 1928.

Now the position is that in my capacity as one of the treasurers of the Joint Strike Committee, which was conducting that strike, these amounts were sent to me. The total sum that I received from the Workers' Welfare League was Rs. 4015-5-0. This amount I received direct and quite openly from the Workers' Welfare League and it was handed over to the Joint Strike Committee and it appears in the balance sheet of the Joint Strike Committee produced after the termination of the Strike. One of the amounts included in the above is £ 100-0-0 received from the A.S D.B.F. & K trades.

The facts are that the whole of this sum was sent by the Trade Union Movement in England to assist the Indian workers on strike, that it was used for this purpose can be shown by the balance sheet of the Joint Strike Committee, but the most important point I want to make is that I received this sum openly direct from the Workers' Welfare League and that no cover at all was necessary. I have never, during the whole of my stay in India, attempted in any way to conceal my connection with the Workers' Welfare League of India. The correspondence that the Prosecution have put in is a sufficient evidence to this effect. But the Prosecution have thought fit only to put in as evidence the correspondence that passed after a certain date and concocted the story that after a certain date when the Public Safety Bill was

being put forward I became bold. Had they put in my earlier correspondence they could not have maintained their theory that my mother and my brother were being used as a cover to send me sums of money. The point I want to emphasise is that I was in continuous correspondence with the Workers' Welfare League almost from the time that I arrived in India because I knew the Workers' Welfare League to be the official representative in England of the All-India Trade Union Congress, that no attempt on my part or on the part of the Workers' Welfare League was made to conceal anything as shown by the evidence. But these letters only date from 8.9.29 from my side that is P. 1861 and from the Workers' Welfare League 23.8.28 P. 1860. What has happened to the letters that passed before these dates. What has happened to the letter referred to in P. 1860 which contained receipts for the money received for the Joint Strike Committee. The C.I.D. apparently have no record of this correspondence, or if they have, the Prosecution have conveniently not put them on record. Had they done so it would have caused some confusion in respect of the conclusions that they desire the Court to draw.

Now according to the Prosecution I was working in India for 18 months, from September, 1927 to March, 1929 when I was arrested. If all the amounts which the Prosecution have put on record and which they alleged to have been received by me are reckoned up, it comes to the enormous sum of Rs. 5365-10-0 approximately. This includes Rs. 1055-0-0 received by me after my arrest while in jail. But even if the total sum of Rs. 5305-10-0 is taken and divided by 18 that is the number of months that I was working in India, it comes to only Rs. 298-1-5 per month. It follows that according to this calculation I was in receipt of Rs. 298-1-5 per month and on this huge sum according to the Prosecution you are to believe that I was hired by Moscow to create the machinery and to finance the movement to overthrow the sovereignty of the King Emperor in India. I had to pay my hotel bills and I travelled about India considerably. That I was short of money even to pay for these necessary expenses my letters and telegrams showed and to suggest that I had money to use for other

purposes is sheer nonsense. The whole proposition is as ridiculous as it is fantastic. I emphatically deny the allegation of the Prosecution in reference to the question of money received by me while in India.

P. 2428: The reference on P. 2428 series is a business reference and should follow the explanation already given in P. 1514.

### **The Workers' Welfare League of India**

A large amount of correspondence alleged to have passed between myself and the Workers' Welfare League as has been put in as evidence. All this correspondence it will be seen dealt with Trade Union activities and strikes. In view of these documents and also in view of the suggestion made by the Prosecution that the W.W. League paid me my salary while I was in India, and that it was a Communist body, I desire to place the Court in full possession of the facts about this body as I have them. Although I have mentioned the numbers of these exhibits here I may find it necessary to refer at a later stage to the contents. In the beginning I should just like to recall how the Prosecution introduced this body the Workers' Welfare League as an important "conspiratorial" organisation. The Crown Counsel in his opening address produced an interesting graph in which certain organisations were placed in relation to each other. The graph, however, did not prove much of a success, perhaps the Prosecution Counsel was not very skilled at the job of producing such a thing, because he apparently found some difficulty in placing certain of the organisations that he wanted to account for and therefore he said in his address. "Then there are other bodies which it is slightly difficult to place. Two of them are the Workers' Welfare League and the Labour Research Department". Little things like this, however, did not deter the Prosecution, the Workers' Welfare League had to be branded as a protege of the Comintern, and this was done in spite of the uncertainty of the Prosecution and their lack of evidence. The Scotland Yard C.I.D. witnesses brought out to India at considerable expense, should have at least been able to tell the Court something to substantiate the allegation of the Prosecution. In spite of the fact that the Prosecution tried to draw this information out, only vague

inferences were forthcoming such as the Workers' Welfare League was in close touch with the "Sunday Worker" (which according to the evidence of Mr. Brailsford was not a Communist organ) or, that the "Morning Post" had called it a Bolshevik Organisation. Those of us who know the "Morning Post" can credit it with manufacturing any wild scare, to satisfy the thirst of its Anglo-Indian and empire building readers.

D/- 30.6.31.

To try to add weight to their story much has been made by the Prosecution about the address of the League. Comrade Spratt has already made some reference to the offices at 162 Buckingham Palace Road. The League during its 13 years of existence has had several addresses as the membership-card (D 709) will show. During the time while I was in England and a member of the League its meeting place was at Doughty House, 18 Doughty Street. This was the Headquarters of the N.A.F.T.A. This is the Furnishing Trade Workers' Union, but it did not mean to say that the W.W. L. had come under the influence of the furnishing trade workers, or that it had become a furnishing trade workers' body. Of course, applying the logic of the Prosecution and of the "Morning Post" that because the office of the League was at 162 Buckingham Palace Road for a time it must be a Communist body because another alleged Communist body had an office in the same building. This argument, of course, of the Prosecution is foundationless, and at any rate very bad evidence.

Now I should like to say something about the history of the League and its work. The Magistrate in his committal order, page 76 shows a deplorable lack of information in respect of this organisation when he says that: "it started with the initial advantage of being the representative in England of the A.I.T.U.C." I cannot let this go without correcting it, the Workers' Welfare League was started just three years before the foundation of the A.I.T.U.C.

The facts are that the Workers' Welfare League was founded by Mr. A.G. Field, an individual who desired to assist the Indian

workers, in the year 1917. Another point I should like to emphasise is that the date of the foundation of the League shows that it was founded exactly three years before the foundation of the Comintern and four years before the R.I.L.U. was brought into being and the same year that the Russian revolution took place. This being so it could hardly be an offshoot either of the Comintern or the R.I.L.U., as the Prosecution would lead the Court to believe.

Thus the position is that a few Indian and British subjects in England founded the League in 1917 and were, in a very short time, able to show a substantial organisation. The objects of it were, in short, to safeguard the interests of the workers of India, to lay facts about the conditions of labour etc. before the workers of England, at the same time making it clear that the exploitation of labour in any part of the Empire is detrimental to the general interests of the workers throughout the Empire. This is according to the constitution and rules of the W.W.L. which I tender.

I would just mention briefly some of the work done by the League and its activities since its foundation. In 1919, that is before this alleged conspiracy started, the League sent a memorial to the Secretary of State for India drawing attention to the omission of any reference to the question of improvement of conditions of the workers in the Montague-Chelmsford Report, and urged the need for steps to be taken on behalf of the Indian workers. In 1920, the League was able to persuade the General Council of the British Trade Union Congress to approach the Secretary of State for India in connection with the strikes that were taking place then in India, and called for the granting of Trade Union rights for Indian workers. Further the first time that an appeal was ever issued for financial help on behalf of the Indian workers on strike was issued by the Workers' Welfare League in 1924 resulting in assistance being sent to the strikers. Again in 1925, the League was successful in getting the General Council of the British Trade Union Congress to make a grant to the Indian workers then in dispute. The League was responsible for general interest being roused in England about the terrible conditions of Indian Labour that exist on the tea plantations and

was responsible for the workers' delegation coming to India, one from the Trade Union Congress and the other directly representing the Workers' Welfare League, Mr. Mardy Jones. These delegates attended the Cawnpore Session of the A.I.T.U.C.

Another example of the work of the League is shown in the 10th Annual Report for the year 1927 which has been tendered and marked D. 711. The assistance was rendered during the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Strike of 1927 and on this occasion financial help was sent with the co-operation of the British Trade Union Congress. This report shows general co-operation between the League and the British Trade Union Congress. In one part of the Report it says, "Further correspondence with the General Council followed and finally the League is glad to report that a receipt or letter couched in cordial terms, recording appreciation for the work of the League, and expressing the view of the General Council that any appeals from the A.I.T.U.C. to the British T.U.C. should reach the latter directly and not through the medium of the League. The League Council accepted this suggestion and informed the General Council of the T.U.C. that it would also keep them informed of any approach to the British authorities or such action taken by the League in this country."

The League is a non-political body and includes among its members representatives of all working-class organisations, Communist and non-Communist. The membership of the League is mainly by affiliated organisations and in this matter the 10th Annual Report shows a considerable increase in affiliated Trade Unions.

Among the eighty affiliated societies are the Iron and Steel Federation, The London Society of Compositors, the N.A.F.T.A., the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, the National Amalgamated Building Trade Operatives, etc.

The 11th Annual Report for the year ending December, 31st 1928 as presented to the Annual meeting held in London on February the 16th, 1929. (It is hereby tendered and marked as D. 712). It deals with the work done during the year, and this is the most important year as far as I am concerned according to the Prosecution, it refers to the tremendous economic upheaval



witnessed in India during 1928, and class character of British Imperialism, and the brutal method used to suppress strikes and the working-class movement, and the need for closer co-operation between the British and the Indian workers.

The fact is that the League was able to collect £ 440-0-0 to assist the Bombay Textile workers on strike during the year, which was received by the Joint Strike Committee. This is the amount which I referred to earlier and which was sent to me, £ 40-0-0 was sent to assist the S.I. Rly. strikers and £ 10 to assist the Jute workers on strike at Bauria. Trade Union Conferences were organised by the League in order to draw the attention of the British workers to the Indian Labour situation.

Considerable importance is sought to be attached by the Prosecution to the reports and correspondence alleged to have been sent by me to Mr. Potter Wilson of the Workers' Welfare League which deals with strikes and Trade Union matter. I would draw your honour's attention to the para in the 11th Annual Report which runs as follows: "During 1928, Mr. N. M. Joshi, General Secretary of the T.U.C. has week by week forwarded a summary of news on the strikes taking place in India. Full reports were also received from the Joint Strike Committee conducting the Bombay Textile strikes."

Was there anything conspiratorial in these reports sent by Mr. N. M. Joshi? If not, then there was nothing conspiratorial in the reports alleged to have been sent by me also during 1928.

It will be seen by this Report that further affiliations of organisations were made during 1928 from such organisations as A.E.U., S.W.M.F. Trades Councils and Co-operative Guilds etc. Because of the excellent work that the League was doing on behalf of the Indian workers, the A.I.T.U.C. decided to make the League its agent in Great Britain. The foregoing information should be sufficient to explode the canard of the Prosecution that this organisation was a Communist body or that it was a conspiratorial body. With the continued recurrence of labour disputes, the indiscriminate shooting of strikers by the Police and Military, the bad conditions, the long working hours and low wages etc. the need for an organisation that will courageously put forward the position of the

Indian working class is great and of immense value to the Indian workers. The Workers' Welfare League of India has worked as an open organisation for the last 13 years, and will continue to do so, giving every assistance to the Indian working class movement. It is the set policy of British Imperialism to prevent the British working class from helping the Indian workers. The attitude of the Prosecution in dragging in the Workers' Welfare League in this case is a part of this set policy. An organisation such as this, that has shown practical results in drawing together in the struggle the workers of India and Britain, has of course become a menace to British Imperialism. The modern method of Imperialism to discredit a body is to broadcast the suggestion that it is under the influence and control of Communists, in this way making it possible for the Government at any time to attach it to some particular "Conspiracy Case" that they may hatch. The workers are not so easily gulled as this, they know the methods of Imperialism, the link once forged between the workers of India and Britain will not be allowed to be so easily broken.

The Prosecution have not put on record any concrete evidence to support their allegation in reference to the League, I desire again to emphatically deny the absurd allegation of the Prosecution that the Workers' Welfare League is a Communist body or under the influence of Communists, or that it paid me my salary while I have been in India.

P. 2417: I desire at the moment to make some reference to this exhibit. It is one of the many letters written to Potter Wilson. In this case I wish to draw your attention to the post-script, where you will find "enclosed find 'The Spark' a new paper that has just come out, it has got to be improved;" now with regard to this post-script the Magistrate observes, while summing up the evidence against Mr. Desai, "Bradley sent a copy almost at once to Potter Wilson with the remark "it has got to be improved". He obviously regarded it as a vehicle for conspiracy". Unfortunately it is not so obvious to me. I never knew Mr. Desai personally. But when I read in the Bombay papers that a socialist weekly would soon come out, I was naturally interested in the news and was keen to

see the paper. I would have been a poor Communist if I did not keep my eyes open to what the Socialists were doing. Further I thought that Mr. Potter Wilson, as Secretary of the Workers' Welfare League, may like to have a look at this paper and perhaps like to order it for himself as there was no other English Socialist paper going at the time.

I could never fancy such a far-fetched meaning could be read into my casual and impersonal remark "it has got to be improved." What was in my mind when this letter was written, was that the paper as such was absurdly small to be of much use to any body, and of course being in English it did not get to the workers. From what I gathered when I saw the paper, especially its first editorial, one having any first hand acquaintance with the labour movement could not possibly have any allusion about its scope and policy. Obviously it could at best be compared with an I.L.P. organ. Apart from the harm such a paper would incidentally do the most we Communists could hope for was to sometime get a carefully written article in its columns on some topical subject just as similar of my contributions which were occasionally published in the nationalist papers. However, a paper that looked up to the 'Daily Herald' as its ideal could not conceivably be expected to give quarter to communist propaganda as such.

### **Cryptic Documents**

*P. 1671, P. 1672 and P. 1673.*

P. 1671 P: is a photograph of a letter addressed to "Mac" over the signature of one Leonard, and according to the date was posted a few days after my arrival in India. This letter, containing as it does cryptic figures, has been made much use of by the Prosecution. Like many other documents and much of the evidence that the Prosecution have put in in this case they have made full use of these exhibits irrespective of whether they have been proved or they could have proved them satisfactorily or not. Similarly with the Magistrate, he has accepted whatever version the Prosecution have put forward in respect of any exhibit and unscrupulously used it in framing the case against me. What is the story that is told by the Prosecution witness in respect of

P. 1671 P. P.W. 262 who deposed to having "intercepted" this letter says that he went to the Mole, Ballard Pier and there picked up a letter addressed to E. J. Horsmen. Further the cover was of the same size and colour as the other letters, which were censured, written by Bradley. On this evidence this letter is to be credited to my account.

It should be a perfectly patent fact known to every sane individuals that many thousands of letters are posted everyday at the G.P.O. Bombay by thousands of persons who are entire strangers to each other, and the covers of these letters are in an overwhelming majority of cases exactly of the same size, shape and colour. Nevertheless P.W. 262 says that he obtained a photograph of this interesting letter which is now P. 1671 P. But we do not see any evidence of a photograph of the very important envelope with the address on it, we have apparently got to accept the word of the C.I.D. that such a thing did exist at all. The Bombay C.I.D. being satisfied that the above was not sufficient evidence and could not be accepted by any one as proof that I was the originator of it, they set to work to put it on a more concrete basis.

It is passing strange that in the case of P. 1671 P. the Bombay police thought it necessary to prepare a special report and this report appears as P. 1672. Now it is only in this police report that we find the alleged address of the letter P. 1671, it apparently was not thought of sufficient importance to photograph the envelope upon which so much reliance is placed by the Prosecution. Nevertheless it is upon this police report P. 1672 that a story is concocted to substantiate the allegation of the Prosecution. In this exhibit a mysterious Mr. Hill is spoken of as giving information, we do not know who this individual is and he was not called as a witness in this case to give evidence on this matter. This police report goes on to say that another letter was intercepted which was addressed to Asaf of Hyderabad, Deccan, and in this letter there is reference to Mac. This brings me to P. 1673 P. Again in this instance it was not thought of sufficient importance to produce the photographic copy of this envelope. Perhaps the two envelopes of P. 1671 and P. 1673 were not the same.

Before I proceed I would just like to refer to certain remarks passed by the late Mr. Langford James. He says that I write an excellent hand but found it necessary to print this letter P. 1671. On the other hand that I did print this letter has not and can not be satisfactorily proved by the Prosecution, is now apparent, and because they have no proof on this scope they try to introduce substantiation from another direction to attempt to prove that I wrote this letter. Necessary Explanation must be given, I would not attempt to keep the Court in the dark over this matter, this is my explanation.

During my travel and voyage from England to India in 1927 I made friends with several individual co-passengers, as one usually does on such a trip. Among these individuals were, two, A. A. Baig of Hyderabad, Deccan, and the other was a Mr. M. Ellis who was coming out to India as a sub-editor on the 'Statesman'. As is shown by P.W. 182 Ex. P. 672. The three of us Mr. M. Ellis, A. A. Baig and myself had our photographs taken on board the Ranpura and this photo is copied on P. 1673. A. A. Baig the individual whom I met on board the Ranpura and to whom the letter P. 1673 is addressed comes of a very highly respectable family in Hyderabad, Deccan. It is extremely remarkable that though the Prosecution supplied us with a long list of names of co-conspirators during the Magistrates Court and yet I could not find the name of Asaf Baig among them. On the other hand the Prosecution seek to rely upon this letter P. 1673 to Asaf Baig to prove that a certain letter containing cryptic code was written by me, this is according to the police report P. 1672. The late Mr. Langford James in his Address says "I have no doubt in time Mr. Bradley may explain who Mac is". I will now proceed to enlighten the Prosecution, if they do not already know who Mac is in P. 1673 P. The Prosecution claimed that the Mac referred to in P. 1673 is the same Mac to whom the letter P. 1671 is addressed. Now all this is very interesting and the product of the very fertile imagination which the Prosecution have shown they possess by even carrying on this case. The argument of the Prosecution presupposes that Asaf Baig was a co-conspirator; presupposes that he knew who Mac was; at any rate it is quite within reason to

claim that Asaf Baig was in possession of certain facts and if the Prosecution claim is correct that P 1673 P supports their proposition that the same person wrote P 1671 P then Asaf Baig is in possession of some very valuable information that should have been secured for the Court. However, he was never called as a Prosecution witness nor was his name put down on the list of co-conspirators, the fact that he was living in Hyderabad does not cut any ice. The Prosecution have been able to produce persons from any where, Great Britain, French, India and also from Hyderabad in the form of Liaquat Husain P W 193. I claim that the Prosecution have deliberately evaded bringing Asaf Baig here as a witness. Had he come he would have had to give the lie to the fantastic story concocted by the Prosecution.

The truth about P 1673 is that Asaf Baig and Mr M Ellis as I have said, travelled together on the Ranpura. Mr Ellis was known to Asaf Baig and myself as "Mac" and he came to India to take up a job on the "Statesman" as a sub-editor. The reference to Mac in P 1673 P is that I wrote to Mr M Ellis a few days before this letter was written and sent him some copies of this and other photographs taken during the voyage and I addressed him as Mac. Apparently the Bombay C I D seem to have missed that letter very conveniently. There is not the slightest truth in the Prosecution story in relation to this matter. I know nothing about P 1671 P and certainly never wrote it. I wish to state that this document has been put in on the most flimsy evidence and attached to me, the facts that I have put forward can be substantiated by either of the two persons I have mentioned that is, Mr Asaf Baig and Mr M Ellis. If you look at P 639 written on the back of two of my visiting cards appear the names and addresses of both these persons.

Before I go on with the question of the other exhibits of this character I should like to refer to the question of cryptic figures and my suggested pseudonyms. The Prosecution had an amazing knack of solving these figures and suggested that the key could be found in Palgrave's Golden Treasury. Well I know nothing about this. No copy of Palgrave's Golden Treasury was found with me in spite of the fact that strict instructions were given to the Police to

seize any such inflammable material. The Magistrate seems to have no difficulty whatsoever in arranging certain new names for me. He first attaches "fred" to me and says: "his initial 'F' stands for Francis not Frederick". This of course cannot be used to support the contention that 'fred' was a false name used by me. Then I am given the pseudonym of Leonard and against this is to be added another name of Jack, without any apparent reason these names are to be foisted upon me and without any evidence to support such a contention.

### **Explanation of P. 673 and P. 674**

There are several pieces of evidence put in by the Prosecution in this case which have come rather as a surprise, of course that is to be expected in a case of this character. I suppose P. 674 can be put into this category. The late Mr. Langford James in his opening address said he "had no doubt that I would be able to throw considerable light upon this letter". At the same time he gave a long discourse on this exhibit explaining how it is alleged to have come into the hands of the Police and then telling us what he considered the letter really meant. There is no doubt that light, considerable or otherwise, is very necessary in respect of this exhibit and because of this I will proceed to give my explanation about this extremely mysterious document. Whether I do this to the satisfaction of your Honour and the Prosecution is a matter that remains to be seen.

In the first place I would deal with the circumstances under which it was 'discovered'. According to the evidence of P.W. 175 Mr. Sandwell this exhibit P. 674 was found in one of his cupboards. The story is that on the 24th of April, 1929 Sandwell's servant Joseph D' Souza brought this letter to him saying that on the day before he had found it while shifting an almirah following the instructions to do so by Mr. Sandwell. On receiving this from Joseph D' Souza Mr. Sandwell immediately sent it off to Inspector B. Derojinsky of the Bombay C.I.D. Why he should have sent any document to Mr. B. Derojinsky, an individual whom very few people indeed in Bombay can know, is a fact that needs very serious consideration. Now I should explain that I left Bombay on

the 6th of March, 1929 for an organising tour of the G.I.P. Railway and did not return to Bombay until the 24th of March on which day I was arrested. However the document was not 'discovered' until exactly one month after this according to the evidence of P.W. 175, P.W. 228 and P. 673 and that was almost seven weeks after I had left Bombay. Although it is shown that Sandwell was extremely interested in my movements on behalf of the C.I.D. still it took him seven weeks to 'find' this document. Mr. Sandwell says that he took over this flat at the beginning of January 1929 and in his cross-examination he could not say which room had been occupied by me as a tenant of Mrs. De Burgh, the individual whom he says he took the flat from, it should be noted that the document P. 674 is dated June 6th, 1928.

From the evidence of Mr. Sandwell it was shown that he had been acting as an amateur detective had been working in close co-operation with the Bombay Police since shortly after my arrival in Bombay in 1927. And that enquiries were continuously being made by Sergeant Littlewood (P. W. 247) and other C.I.D. officers about me from him. Further in reply to a question put by Mr. Sinha Sandwell said that he met Sergeant Littlewood more than he had Derojinsky. On the other hand Derojinsky (P. W. 182) said that he had never visited Mr. Sandwell. That Mr. Sandwell dabbled in amateur detective is shown by his reply to a question put by me that he had "carried out investigations for private people, industrial thefts and the like". Further this witness P.W. 175 is able to say that the doors of the flat were invariably kept open day and night and that it was possible for any one to enter the flat at any time. After the alleged finding of such an important document it is very strange that there was no search made where the document was supposed to have been found. I should have thought that after "finding" such a document the Police would have made a thorough search of the place to discover if any more such documents were lying about, according to the evidence of all those who have deposed to this exhibit no such thing was done.

Let me now pass on to the next witness that deposes to this document. P. W. 182 Inspector B. Derojinsky, a Russian by birth, and according to his own statement, was present in Russia during



the revolutionary period of 1917. His very name and origin introduces an atmosphere of suspicion. From his evidence it is quite apparent that he is a bitter opponent of the present Soviet system of Government in Russia and that he bore a heavy political bias and personal animosity to the workers' Government there. It is common knowledge now that Russians who are opposed to the workers' rule in Russia and, who have been forced to leave that country on these grounds, have found willing allies in Imperialist countries surrounding, to carry on their intrigues. Every method possible has been used by Imperialism assisted by Russian Whites to smash the workers' State without success. One of these methods has been that of producing forgeries of documents to create an atmosphere of opposition and prejudice against U.S.S.R. and to be used in cases of this character.

In the latter part of the year 1920, a group of Russian Whites similar to Derojinsky were active in London, they conceived the idea of printing imitation copies of the Moscow Daily "Pravda" referred to by P.W. 182. These forged newspapers were produced and were to be shipped into Soviet Russia for anti-communist agitational purposes. British Government institutions lent their aid to this project, one of which was the famous Scotland yard, the institutions that also kindly assisted Prosecution in this case and provided them with some witnesses. The question of the forgery of this daily paper "Pravda" was brought up in the House of Commons and in a reply to a question the then Home Secretary Mr. Shortt admitted on March the 3rd, 1921 that the Director of Intelligence, "assisted them, i.e. the Russian Whites, to the extent of arranging for the removal of the English printers' names from the news sheets and for their being forwarded to an address in one of the countries bordering on Russia." (Hansard).

It is only to be expected that Derojinsky would deny having fabricated any documents for the Government, and further, as the Crown Counsel says that he is prepared not to object to any argument which the defence may put forward, that this witness

has a political bias to the extent that he prefers the old regime to the present one in Russia, the circumstances under which P. 674 is produced as evidence lend support to the proposition that it is simply another case such as I have mentioned.

Among the many forgeries of a like nature that have taken place, perhaps, the best known is the "Zinoviev Letter", reference to which appear in many of the Prosecution exhibits. I will briefly touch upon this to show the methods and use of forgeries. The "Zinoviev Letter" was produced as the bombshell during the General Election Campaign of 1924. That the "Zinoviev Letter" was a forgery none will now deny, and like some of the documents put forward by the Prosecution in this case it was supposed to have been instructions from the Communist International, but of course in this instance to the C.P.G.B. on the tactics that should be employed during the election and also the need for working within the British Army with a view to paralyse all the military preparation of the bourgeoisie, this is according to the Government Blue Book 1927. An official of the British Foreign Office, a Mr. Gregory was responsible for the publication of this letter in the press and as a result of the fabrication and publication of this letter the Tories were returned to Parliament with an overwhelming majority. The same official of the British Foreign Office has since become involved in the "Francs Case" and was suspected of illegal practices and has had to leave the Foreign Office. Among the many reasons, that go to support the fact that the "Zinoviev Letter" was forged is that the original has never been published and as a matter of fact was never seen by any British Official. At the same time several copies were in circulation in Great Britain and they all differed in certain details, had the original if any been produced these mistakes would have been revealed. Like the Ex. P. 674 the "Zinoviev Letter" contained in itself much internal evidence which supports the fact that it was a forgery. The question as to the authenticity of the "Zinoviev Letter" "has been raised in the House of Commons on and off

from 1924. The Tory Government refused an enquiry into the matter while on the other hand the Government of U.S.S.R. invited an enquiry. A delegation of the British Trade Union Congress visited Moscow to investigate and came back satisfied that no such letter ever left the Communist International. Not only in Great Britain but in all other countries Russian Whites have been creating their forgeries, some of which have come to light, Druzhelovesky who worked in Berlin, and Orlov and Sumarokov who worked both in New York and Berlin. Similarly in the case of Derojinsky who travelled and remained in Turkey, Egypt and other places and had there connections with the British Police according to his evidence. In March 1928 Mr. Ramsay MacDonald declared that the letter, that is the "Zinoviev Letter" was a deliberately planned and devised concoction of deceit fitted artfully for the purpose of deceiving the public and to influence the election. That it played a major part in the verdict none will deny, that it was a fraudulent one few will dare to deny" Mr. MacDonald declared that this was only one of the many forged documents of this character that had been circulated. In the instance of P. 674 I consider the authorities have been extremely brazen in their methods. Here is a case of a Russian White, who had carried on exceedingly shady transactions while living in Russia after the Revolution, as shown by cross-examination, travelling around the world without a passport and being received with open arms by the British Police at different places. He was welcomed by the Police at Constantinople and taken within their ranks for a period. He was thought to be of more use in another place and travelled to Egypt, and then after a little more meandering he comes to India, where he again is allowed to land apparently without a passport. This is more than even an Englishman or an Indian would attempt to do. A few days after he lands in Bombay, he is called by the Commissioner of Police, not to be questioned about his landing without a passport but to be asked if he would join the Police service, Special Branch, without any apparent reason.

Before closing on this matter I shall just return to the evidence of P.W. 228 who said that "it may be 5 or 7 days" after I had left the Room that the document P. 674 was found. Now as I have already stated I left Bombay on 6th of March and did not return again until the 24th of March on which day I was arrested directly. I arrived at Grant Road Station, yet the document was not sent to Derojinsky until the 25th of April as P. 763 shows. There is a considerable difference between 5 or 7 days which could have made the date of "finding" about the 10th or 12th of March and not the 25th of April. This statement of P.W. 228 throws considerable doubt on the question as to when this exhibit was really "found". Much more can be said about the evidence given by these witnesses that were brought by the Prosecution to prove this document, where the statement of one witness conflicts with another, but sufficient has already been said.

Mr. Stott, the handwriting expert has given his expert opinion that P. 674 was typed on the same machine that typed P. 345 etc. I can only say that Mr. Stott is the Government of India handwriting expert and in the pay of the Government and work in the office of the Director of Intelligence Bureau. I was not in a position to bring a handwriting expert to disprove this opinion. Nevertheless the Government have in the past as events have shown, not been averse to producing forged documents. They have not been averse to assisting Russian Whites or on the other hand taking assistance from them. I claim that this is another incident of this character and that this document P. 674 came to light in a very suspicious manner. The document in itself is an extraordinary concoction containing as it does strange cryptic references and figures, a document that the Prosecution could weave many fantastic stories around, and with a case such as this where there appears no overt illegal act it is necessary to produce such documents to create the correct atmosphere. It is my opinion that this document P. 674 was purposely forged to produce evidence against me and to strengthen the case of the Prosecution. I suggest that this document was deliberately placed in the almirah and then De Souza was asked to clean it out. I deny having any knowledge whatsoever of this document.

In respect of P 654 I may have received such a letter, but I do not know As regards the other documents P 2404, 2408, 1802, 1809 and also P 2432(2) I know nothing about these I should like to say generally as far as the suggestion of the Prosecution is concerned about the transposition code or cipher and figure code etc , which appear in some of these documents I agree with the reply that has been given on this matter by Mr Spratt

D/- 1731

Q With regard to your activities in connection with the A I T U C and with T U 's strikes there is the following evidence on the record P 666, 2249, 661, 1206(1), 638, 659, 670, P W 's 111, 123, 254 P 958, 944, 967, 2080, P W 's 245, 273, 276, 278, P 2239, 2240(2), 2241(2), 2244, 1703, 1705, 1710(2), 1721(2), 1725, 1728, 1729(2), 1730, 2226, 1690, 1727, 653, 107, 954, 1035, 1259, 1628, 526(2) and 43 Have you anything to say about this evidence? (Note Accused did not want the exhibits in this question explained to him It was therefore omitted)

A Perhaps the largest portion of evidence against me refers to my Trade Union and strike activities Both the Prosecution and the Magistrate have stressed the point that my activities in India lay chiefly with Trade Unions This fact is not strange for a Communist and a Trade Unionist I should like to state here that I am a member today of one of the largest and oldest Trade Unions in England, the Amalgamated Engineering Union Workers who are Communist are members of this Trade Union These Communists contest and take official position in the Union The Communists are in fact looked to by the workers generally for the lead on almost all occasions I was myself a member of the London District Committee of the Union up to the time I came to India in 1927 I have therefore been rather astounded to hear from the

Prosecution side and also from other quarters the muddled ideas put forward on Trade Unionism. Of course, from the Prosecution side a twisted interpretation has got to be placed upon my activities and the activities of the other communists because the Trade Union Movement occupies a very prominent position in this case. The Counsel for the Prosecution has said that our activities in connection with this movement form one of the most important parts of the case, and has gone to some length to describe certain aspects of it. In doing so he has been guilty of much misrepresentation and distortion. It is, therefore, necessary that our views on the Trade Union Movement be set-forth.

We have heard much of 'genuine' Trade Unions and 'genuine' Trade Union activities. Like the exhibits that have been put to me now much of the evidence tendered by the Prosecution to prove this case was obtained from the offices of registered Trade Unions when the searches of the accused took place on March the 20th 1929. This evidence consists of resolutions, minute books, reports of meetings, speeches and letters to other organisations etc. etc. The Prosecution have also obtained through their organisation the C I D reports of strikes, strikers' meetings, incidents arising from picketing, organisation of volunteer corps, Trade Union Managing Committee meetings, Trade Union resolutions, Trade Union Congress reports, demonstrations, speeches of the accused in Trade Union meetings, in fact all possible activities in connection with the working of the Trade Union Movement as such. At the same time they have stressed the point that the accused were doing their utmost to link up the Indian Trade Union Movement with such working-class organisations outside India as the R I L U, the Workers' Welfare League, the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, the League against Imperialism and so on.

Our crime according to the Prosecution is that our activities in this connection were "not primarily for the immediate improvement of the workers' lot, but to train them in solidarity and the united action and in this connection to instigate them to strike both for educative purposes and also as a training in strike methods, leading on eventually to a general strike, which is intended to paralyse the Government and create a revolutionary situation.

(C O , page 6)

This is put forward before a bourgeois court by a member of the bourgeoisie, with little or no knowledge of the terrible conditions under which the workers have to toil and exist, or of the methods of exploitation adopted by the exploiters to grind down the workers and extract their profits, with little or no knowledge of the functions of the Trade Union Movement and its International character, or what Trade Unionism stands for. The Prosecution declare that they are not attacking the Trade Union Movement. They have protested to this effect again and again. The committal order, page 10 says, "It has been alleged at times that the case is an attack upon Trade Unionism. This again is a misconception. The Prosecution has very fairly stated that any of the accused who may be found to be a genuine Trade Unionist and not a communist conspirator should be discharged."

But in order to maintain their claim they have to give their views of what the movement is and should be. The committal order proceeds, "A definition of the term 'genuine Trade Unionist' is perhaps difficult. In my opinion a 'genuine Trade Unionist' is one who is primarily concerned with the improvement of the existing conditions of the workers with which his Union is concerned. He is connected with politics only in so far as he aims at getting legislation for such improvement. He creates strikes for the same object. A Communist on the other hand has a different objective. He hopes to improve the condition of the working-class, not in the immediate future, but in the more distant future, not by the conciliation of the employers or by favourable legislation but by the destruction of the employing class and the abolition of the existing system of Government." The whole position of the Prosecution in relation to this part of the case turns on the question of the nature of the 'genuine' Trade Union Movement. I can readily grant that if the movement is really as they picture it, and as it is described above, then they need not trouble to attack it. But this is not the Trade Union Movement as it exists, either in India or anywhere else. Even Mr & Mrs Sydney Webb in their *History of Trade Unionism*, page 1, say "A Trade Union as we understand the term, is a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or

improving the conditions of their working lives " Then they give a foot-note In the first edition we said "of their employment " This has been objected to as implying that the Trade Unions have always contemplated a perpetual continuance of the capitalist or wage system No such implication was intended Trade Unions have at various dates during the past century at any rate, frequently had aspirations towards a revolutionary change in the social and economic relations " Though we are not prepared to accept every statement of the Webbs as correct, we think that they are far nearer the truth in this instance than the Magistrate

In attempting to give expression to his views about the Trade Union Movement, in the passage quoted, the Magistrate shows clearly the limitation which the bourgeoisie attempt to impose upon the movement, but I claim that this viewpoint has nothing in common with the Trade Union Movement as it really is He says in so many words that in order to conform to the interest of the bourgeoisie, the Trade Union Movement should only be concerned with immediate economic conditions (He adds somewhat naively but from the bourgeoisie point of view correctly "of the workers with which his Union is concerned " This falls into line entirely with the atrocious Trade Disputes Acts of 1929 which forbids any Union to interest itself in the struggle of the workers of another industry )

In respect of politics they may enter them only in so far as it is necessary to try and obtain certain remedial legislation The Trade Union Movement cannot have a policy of its own based upon the re-construction of society In short the Trade Union Movement should accept these limitations and have no other ambitions Capitalism and the present state of society with all that it imposes upon the workers must be accepted by them without question

The Prosecution have shown that this is their view of the matter again and again Thus the present Senior Counsel of the Prosecution in connection with our proposal to introduce resolution in Union meetings on the Chinese revolution etc (P. 1981) said, "what these things have to do with Trade Unionism I do not know " Apparently the workers are not even to discuss political questions in their Unions



It is a fact that the bourgeoisie have succeeded more or less completely in imposing certain limitations upon the Trade Union Movement. This has happened because the bourgeoisie control the State machinery and have found agents within the movement. But nevertheless we assert that these limitations are forced upon the Trade Union Movement by an antagonistic class which seeks to crush it. This case in particular can be cited as a classical example of the effort of the bourgeoisie to impose limitations upon the Indian Trade Union Movement, and to attempt to crush it.

I desire here to contradict the position maintained by the Magistrate and the Prosecution as to our relations with the Trade Union Movement. As Communists we do not base our stand on any abstract right. Our view and our stand is born of the actual realities of the class-struggle in operation. Any attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie to impose its policy upon the working-class movement is met by us with vigorous opposition. Whilst it is the correct policy of the Trade Union Movement to have before itself the programme for the "improvement" of the workers' condition within the system of Capitalism, by both economic means and by legislation. Nevertheless it is a fact that there can be no real or lasting improvement under Capitalism. Therefore, it is our policy to consider the means for attaining socialism and to this end we work for the mobilisation of the masses of workers for the revolution. In a colonial country this takes the form of the revolutionary fight for Independence and the overthrow of Imperialism. These are the historic tasks of the working-class which it is bound to undertake. The bourgeoisie naturally in self-defence try to place these limitation upon its action and consciousness, but the working-class cannot recognise them and must break through them in spite of any legal and forcible restraint.

We Communists are accused in our turn of being "outsiders", who are trying to force our point of view upon the working-class and the Trade Union Movement, and to lead it in a path which is unnatural to it, (C.O. pages 46 and 47). That a representative of the bourgeoisie should make such a charge against us is ridiculous. The workers certainly do not support this view-point and I can claim to speak as a worker on this subject.

We deny that we are "outsiders". But we assert that the bourgeoisie sends into the unions ten times as many more "outsiders" as we could possibly do. Mr. N. M. Joshi the universally recognised "leader" of Indian Labour, the only "Labour" representative in the Legislative Assembly who has been working for many years in the Unions in Bombay is actually a member of the Liberal Party, the Party of the big industrial bourgeoisie Mr. B. Shiva Rao who with Mr. Joshi "represented" Labour on the R.T.C. who has also been working in the Unions for many years, is a close follower of Dr. Besant, and brings with him an ideology even more reactionary than that of Mr. Joshi, of the bourgeoisie of Madras. A still more sinister figure is Mr. K.C. Roy Chaudhri, who has worked for many years in the Unions in Bengal, and last year visited Geneva, where he "represented" Indian Labour, he must be put down as nothing else than a direct agent of the imperialist policy in the Labour Movement. I would refer to Ex. D. 139 (I) which shows how a union, the Kankinara Labour Union, of which he is the President and which he effectively controls, invited the Governor of Bengal to one of the meetings and presented him with an address. It mentions incidentally that another member of this union, Also an "outsider", Mr. Singheswar Prasad Shah was given a certificate by the Police, ostensibly for helping to settle communal disturbances. Also I may deal with D 139 (12) which shows how Mr. K.C. Roy Chaudhri suddenly introduced another "outsider" Mr. B.C. Mondal into the Kanchrapara Railway Workers' Union, had him elected Vice-President and charged him at the same meeting to represent the Union before the Simon Commission and to prepare a memorandum for the purpose, supposedly on behalf of the members of the Union.

These three examples are outstanding, but it is clear that the great majority of the non-working-class leaders of Labour in India are consciously or unconsciously agents of the bourgeoisie trying to confine the Labour Movement to activities which the bourgeoisie can approve. The situation is similar in Great

Britain. There also the bourgeoisie is indignant with the Communists for "interfering" in the Trade Union Movement. Yet that bourgeois class itself, in addition to actually though not directly controlling the Labour Movement through the reformist Labour leaders, openly runs such organisations as the "Liberal Trade Union League" for the corruption of the workers to the politics of the Liberal Party. We see the same kind of thing going on in India even more openly, and it is, therefore, comprehensible that we are amused when charged by the bourgeoisie with being outsiders "meddling" in Trade Union affairs which are not our concern.

But the matter is more important than this. It cannot be answered by a mere retort that the bourgeoisie are guilty of that of which we are charged. It may indeed appear strange that the party such as we are connected with in India, which as yet consists to a considerable extent of middle-class origin should claim to be the party of the working-class and to assist and lead the working-class as a part of itself. The same criticism is made against Marx, Engels and Lenin, the greatest leaders of the workers, none of whom was himself of working-class origin.

It is a fact that historically certain members of the middle-class intelligensia such as those named, have been of great significance in the movement, though they are but a minute fraction of all those who are attracted by the power of the movement, or the spoils to be obtained through it, have attempted to patronise or exploit it.

Those who want to serve the working-class movement must genuinely accept its programme and ideology and really identify themselves with it in thought. And that is what Marx, Lenin and many others did. For though they are held responsible for the ideology and thought of the working-class movement, they derived the material for their classical formulation of this theory from the experiences and struggle of the working-class itself. Marxism would not have come into existence but for the English Chartism, the French working-class movement, with its

revolutionary experiences of 1848 and 1871, and the early struggles of the German Proletariat. Leninism is based on what Marx had achieved, and the later experiences of the European working-class, the triumphs and weaknesses of social democracy and Trade Unionism, the Russian Revolution of 1905, and the beginnings of the colonial revolutionary movements. Marx stands out as a gigantic figure in the history of our movement. None of less he was the product of the movement, and the essential ideas for which he stood, and which he enriched and formulated so clearly are to be found in many of his predecessors and contemporaries. It is even more obvious to us that Lenin was the product of the working-class movement in the Imperialist period, and the essentials of the policy for which he stood are to be found springing up not only in Russia but in all lands at the same time as he was formulating them.

It is the bourgeois evolution of the individual which raises these men above the movement, and rates them as its creators, when in reality they are a part of it and a product of it. These members of the other classes can enter the working-class movement and work as a genuine part of it. And we assert that it is the function in India of the members of the middle-class to form as it were a link between the working-class movement of the world, its traditions and theory, and the young and inexperienced and as yet theoretically ill-equipped working-class of India.

We are not an outside influence 'interfering' with the Proletariat of India, and dragging it from its path. We owe our existence as a party to the existence and struggles of the Indian working-class. We are an organic part of the working-class movement, a product jointly of the early spontaneous struggles of the Indian workers, and the more advanced theory and culture of the older sections of the working-class of the world.

It is true that there has always gone on in all national sections of the Labour Movement a struggle between the policy of reformism, conformity to Capitalism, and that of revolution. The working-class develops from Capitalism and grows within it. It is

influenced by the culture of the bourgeoisie, its interests, its direct pressure by force and corruption. Hence, the strength of the reformist section of the working-class is almost all times considerable, and may for long periods be greater than the strength of the revolutionary section.

But this in no way means that revolution is an unnatural or unsound policy for the working-class to follow. So also the fact that traditionally the Socialist Parties, and since the foundation of the C.I. the Communist Parties, have stood for the policy of revolution, while the Trade Unions have tended to be more reformist, in no way goes to show as the bourgeoisie argues that the C.P., is the external force trying to draw the workers away from the proper policy. The Communist Party represents the truest interest of the workers, it organises within itself the most advanced and conscious section of the workers, and is an integral part of the working-class movement. The Trade Unions and the Communist Party are mutually inter-dependent. The movement is incomplete without either.

Finally, the Prosecution following all bourgeois and reformist critics, has emphasised the charge that while the Reformists are concerned with activity in improvements in present conditions for the workers, we are not so concerned, or are less anxious than the reformists for these things. We cannot allow this to pass unchallenged. Experience proves that exactly the reverse is the case. The Reformists are the servants of the bourgeoisie objectively if not subjectively, and cannot fight the bourgeoisie even for immediate reforms, while we can and do fight the bourgeoisie sectionally or as a whole, for immediate reforms or for political power, without reservation.

Any study of the working-class movement, as it has developed historically, will show the truth of these statements. The British Trade Union Movement is the oldest, as in Britain Industrialism developed before it appeared in any other country. Though not strong in comparison with later times, it was sufficiently troublesome not merely economically but politically, to be

declared illegal in 1799. Thereafter it grew 'underground' for 25 years. On the repeal of the Combination Laws in 1824 it began almost at once to grow rapidly; and developed a definitely revolutionary complexion.

Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Webb who have no predilections in favour of revolution, have described the movement up to 1843, that is the culmination of the biggest wave of Chartism, as 'The Revolutionary Period' (History of Trade Unionism). It is well-known that in this period most of the essentials of the later working-class and socialist theory developed, at any rate in embryo, in the writings and policy of Benbow, Bray, Hodgskin, Thomson, Owen and others. (Reference to this is P. 1782). T. Rothstein in his book 'From Chartism to Labourism' remarks how near some of the leaders of the 'physical force' Wing of the Chartist's, notably Ernest Jones and J.S. Harney, stand to the modern Bolsheviks.

These men were familiar with the ideas of the exploitation of Labour, the class-struggle, the Trade Unions as the organs of the economic struggle of the workers, the combination of the economic and political struggles, the General Strike, the necessity of the use of violence by the working-class, the aim of the movement as not merely political but economic equality, and so on.

Similarly as industrialism sprang up and progressed in other countries in Europe and America, a definitely revolutionary working-class movement sprang up also. The French working-class had at least one serious attempt to overthrow the bourgeoisie (in 1871) and remained predominantly revolutionary at least until the end of that century, while even in the early years of this century and the war time, in the period of the greatest degradation of the World Labour Movement, a substantially large part of the French working-class remained faithful to the revolution.

It is interesting to notice that in France, in contrast to the usual state of things, it was the Unions which were the repositories of the revolutionary spirit among the workers. While the Socialist Parties were corrupted more completely by Imperialism, a section of the Unions always remained true. (Reference to this is P. 48).

Similarly in Germany, in Italy, and the rest of Europe, the Labour Movement, beginning as Socialist or Anarchist groups and parties, and only later developing into Unions, began as a definitely revolutionary movement. Even in the U.S.A. where the American Federation of Labour has been from the beginning in the 80's Predominantly and increasingly reformist, there has always existed side by side with it a Labour revolutionary organisation, in the early days the 'Knights of Labour', and later the I.W.W. And the American Socialist Movement was from its beginning in the 70's revolutionary, only later developing, a Reformist Wing.

In those countries also, in which the Labour Movement has developed only relatively recently, in the period of the corruption of the older section of European and American Labour, it has been, a revolutionary force, examples are Russia, China, Central and South America and Java. In Russia the working-class was from the beginning revolutionary, so consequently were the Unions, so far as they existed. H.N. Brailsford, a Social Democrat in P. 1777, 'How the Soviets work', talks of his surprise at the remark of an old Russian Textile worker that the object of his Union in the early days before 1905 was the overthrow of the Czar.

In P. 1230 'Lenin and the Trade Union Movement', page 10 we read (writing of the period 1900-1905) "thus spontaneous movement of the working masses was developing into a struggle against the employers and later against the autocracy. All these spontaneous actions dovetailed with the political line which was being developed both within the working masses and in those organs of the revolutionary intelligentsia who were working side by side and gradually lining up and welding themselves together with the spontaneous movement."

The Unions, such as they were, took a leading place in the 1905 revolution, in Russia, when for a time they were able to organise relatively freely. They were suppressed in the period of reaction, only to rise again for the overthrow of the Czar in

March 1917, which was the work primarily of the industrial workers. The Unions were organised rapidly, and for a time tolerated the Provisional Government. In October 1917 they were predominantly revolutionary, and played a leading part in the Bolshevik Revolution. Thus in "Lenin and the Trade Union Movement" by Lozovsky (P 1230 Page 19) "In his articles and in his speeches Lenin always considered the Trade Unions as working-class organisations destined to play an immense role in the overthrow of the old system and in the creation of a new one.

During the October Revolution itself there was no break between the Party and the Trade Unions which took an active part in the direct struggle in conjunction with Shop Committees (on page 25) " But why must the Trade Unions in Lenin's opinion come to control the national economy? "Bequase" Lenin replies, "The Trade Unions are Mass Organisations and the revolution is primarily the creation of the masses itself "

In the cases of China and Java, any account of the revolutionary movements in these places shows the leading part taken in the revolution by the Workers' Trade Unions, and the very great difficulty experienced by the bourgeoisie, even after the suppression of the revolutionary Unions by force and terror, in organising reformist Unions having any strength at all. It is useless to multiply examples. All over the world it is found in practice that the policy which the working-class instinctively adopts, as it comes to realise itself as a class, is revolution against Capitalism. It organises under various forms, its Unions and its parties. The Unions with primarily economic aims, but not at all excluding political aims, the Party primarily political but assisting the Unions and the workers generally even in their economic struggles, the two forming together as complementary parts of a single movement with one fundamental aim the Socialist revolution.

The bourgeoisie has always shown itself very conscious of the menace to itself which the Labour Movement represents, even in its primitive and weakest forms. Whatever the type of bourgeois State, absolute monarchy, constitutional monarchy, bourgeois



republic or any other, it has always met the first efforts of the workers to organise even for the most limited purpose with greater suspicion, and often in spite of the absence of the smallest provocation with open force

The British Trade Unions were illegal for 25 years up to 1824. During this period, in 1819, the famous Peterloo Massacre occurred, when troops and police fired into, and cavalry charged a peaceful Workers' Meeting. During and after that period, up to the 50's the workers suffered innumerable sentences, sometimes even transportation at the hands of the bourgeois State. And of course throughout the period, the less spectacular but hardly less deadly weapon of victimisation and blacklisting has been used by the individual employers and their associations.

Even in the period of the highest status in bourgeois society of the Trade Unions, their formal recognition by the employers, their acceptance of their leaders as His Majesty's Cabinet Ministers and Privy Councilors, this weapon is used against the rank and file by the employers on a tremendous scale. It should not be forgotten that the weapon of open force is never completely laid aside, as shown by the Trade Unions and Trade Dispute Act of 1927 and the attitude of the Government during the General Strike and the Miners' Lockout of 1926 in England.

The same sort of history is found in all other countries. We can refer to the German anti-Socialist Laws of 1878 and 1890 and the still more difficult struggle earlier which led to the permanent exile of Marx and the many other leaders of the 40's.

In France Trade Unionism was forbidden completely for many years, and massacres of the organised workers took place in 1848 and again on a greater scale in 1871, not only in Paris, (where the number of workers killed in the White Terror after the fall of the commune is variously given from 30,000 to 60,000), but also in other industrial centres.

The history of the U.S.A. has been distinguished from its beginning right up to the present day by the peculiar ferocity and disregard for its own laws shown by the bourgeoisie in its attack upon the workers (P 48)

In Russia, at first all workers' organisations, and later only those formed by the police (Zubatoff Unions) or organised under very close supervision by the State, were allowed to exist at all, and the savagery with which the workers organisations were suppressed is notorious. Further examples are superfluous.

But open force, though the first weapon used by the bourgeoisie against the workers, and always its last reserve, is not its only weapon. Historically the corruption of the Labour Movement by agents of the bourgeoisie has played a very great part. Already in the period of illegality of the British Trade Unions Francis Place, who may be called the prototype of all Labour reformist, was active among the workers. He worked for and was largely instrumental in securing the repeal of the Combination Laws in 1824, as he saw that sheer repression had the effect of increasing the revolutionary temper of the workers, and he had a subtler and more effective method of defending the bourgeoisie (as stated by Webb, page 109), "Combinations" writes Place to Sir Francis Burdett in 1825, will soon cease to exist. Men have kept together for long periods only by the oppression of the laws, these being repealed Combinations will loose the matter which cements them into masses and they will fall to pieces. All will be orderly as even a Quaker could desire if let alone Combinations, excepting now and then, and for particular purposes under particular circumstances, will cease to exist."

Later, during the rise of the revolutionary wave of Chartism he formed a party. The London Workmen's Association, which attempted to lead the movement, in order to keep it safely under control, and generally practised all the tricks of the modern reformist. Thus historically reformism began as the work of conscious agents of the bourgeoisie and counter-revolution (as Place undoubtedly was in the working-class movement.)

The bourgeoisie has of course not only sent its own men into the movement. It began in that way, and is still mainly dependent on this method in India, but later a much greater part was played in the older movements by the winning over of the working-class leaders. This is effected in many ways, from direct bribery, of which there is no doubt a great deal, though specific cases are

difficult to cite except in America, to merely ideological corruption. The working-class leaders are exposed to bourgeois influence by such means as election or nomination to legislatures, Royal Commissions, Joint Committees with the employers, such as wages boards etc, and the sessions of the Geneva International Labour Office. In these and other ways the bureaucracy of the Trade Union Movement and the leading members of the working-class parties are brought round to acceptance of class collaboration and the revolutionary tendencies of the rank and file are suppressed. The essential historical character of reformism, as Lenin has said, is the influence of the bourgeoisie within the Labour Movement.

Nonetheless it has somewhat deeper roots than the corruption of the leading individuals and bureaucracy of the movement, important though this has been. Francis Place, in spite of his ability and craft, was not successful in keeping the major part of the movement under his control, and the working-class of Britain was mainly revolutionary until the middle 40's. Reformism only defeated revolution definitely after 1848. Reformism could not triumph until its economic basis was laid by the expansion of British Capitalism, which began to go forward very rapidly from that time.

Lenin in his *Imperialism* (P 1752, page 117) says —

"Imperialism has thus a tendency to create privileged sections among the workers, and to detach them from the main proletarian masses." It is worth noticing that in Britain the tendency of Imperialism to divide the toilers, in this way, to encourage opportunism among them and to give rise to a temporary organic decay in the working-class movement showed itself much earlier than the end of the 19th and the beginning of 20th century. For two big distinctive features of Imperialism applied to Britain from midway through the 19th century, vast colonial possessions and the monopolist position in the world markets."

Here he (Engels) points out causes and effects. The causes are, (1) Exploitation of the world by this

country. (2) Its monopolist position in the world market. (3) Its colonial monopoly. The effects are (1) The transformation of a section of the British working-class into the middle class. (2) The opportunity of leading it which part of the working-class accords to a section corrupted by the capitalist class, or at least paid by it".

This is undoubtedly the basis of the widespread prevalence of reformism among the workers of the advanced countries. But this factor does not operate automatically. The employers indulge in all kinds of methods, such as Whitley Councils, Profit-sharing Schemes and so-called "Welfare Work," in order to persuade the workers of their benevolence and the futility of the class-struggle. Even Mr. N. M. Joshi for example in his pamphlet "The Trade Union Movement in India" (D 145) condemns the employer's "Welfare Work" as it is conducted not with the motive which it claims but in order to destroy the workers' solidarity.

Thus reformism or opportunism is the result of first, direct corruption of the agents of bourgeoisie in the working-class movement and secondly the "buying of" of the sections of the working-class by means of concessions, higher wages, etc., which Capitalism in its periods of strength and prosperity is able to do, specially in the Imperialist period. The reformism which has been considered the characteristic feature of British Labour is due to the fact that Britain was able to achieve this kind of position long before other countries. The general rise of opportunism in the working-class movement (from the time of the foundation of the Second International 1889) and its victory (1900 onwards) coincides with the general period of Imperialism and the exploitation of the whole world by a few leading industrial countries.

Reformism has been dominant in the World Labour Movement three decades or more but before the War of 1914 it was of a relatively veiled character. Apart from Great Britain, which was as stated, a special case, the reformist leadership had to keep up some appearances of revolutionary devotion, in order to retain its

hold on the rank and file. The more open cases of opportunism, such as the entry of Socialists into bourgeois Governments, (which is now-a-days a common place in the L.S.I. was then visited by the formal displeasure of the International, expulsion of the members in question etc. The chief achievements of the Pre-war reformism were, (1) in the theoretical field, formulation of a reformist version of Marxism, based on the actual improvement in the position of large sections of European and American working-class and (2) in the political field, the betrayal of the bulk of the European working-class in support of the imperialist war.

At Conferences of the International shortly before the war it was decided to oppose the war, which was then foreseen, by all possible means, and in the event of the war breaking out "to use the political and economic crisis created by the war to rouse the masses of the people and hasten the fall of capitalist domination" (from P 48, page 184). The way in which this resolution was ignored, the workers led to the slaughter and their spontaneous resistance to the imperialist war machine sabotaged by the great majority of the leaders of the pre-war International is now notorious.

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Since the War, international reformism has sunk altogether into new depths of betrayal and has become quite obviously a party supporting the bourgeoisie. The British Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress (Great Britain) leadership are now no longer in any way exceptional. With them stands practically the whole of the L.S.I. in open opposition to revolution, to the U.S.S.R., and the colonial revolutions in open support of the capitalist stabilisation, its rationalisation at the expense of the working-class, its preparations, diplomatic and military, for war both against the U.S.S.R. and against rival imperialist powers. (It is unnecessary to quote details. The actions of the Labour Government in Great Britain are well-known.) Yet the Counsel for the Prosecution is surprised that we condemn these men as 'traitors to the cause'. Not more than ten years ago Mr. J. R. MacDonald and Mr. Snowden were supporting (in words) the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' and the 'Socialist Revolution'.

*This rapid passage of the Social-Democrats to the right and their abandonment of even nominal opposition to Capitalism, has necessitated to the formation of a 'Left Wing' in the L S I which tries to continue the function of the pre-war Social-Democracy, namely opposition to Capitalism in words, but betrayal of the workers to Capitalism in deeds. But for this 'Left Wing' the value of the Social-Democrats to the bourgeoisie would be lost to a considerable extent, as large sections of the more advanced and conscious workers, who now support Social Democracy, would leave it if it were led solely by such open traitors as Mr MacDonald*

Thus the history, considered superficially, of the working-class movement though beginning admittedly with a revolutionary period, has led further and further away from revolution. The present ultra Imperialist, ultra Loyalist position of the Labour and specialist International and the British Labour Party, this is what gives rise to the conception, which the Prosecution cherishes of the true nature of the working-class movement, i.e., a movement in no way hostile to Capitalism. This is supported by the fact of the history of the 19th century which still formed the mental background of the British bourgeoisie, and which appeared to support the theoretical reformism of the pre-war Social Democracy. These are a rising prosperity of Capitalism and a rising standard for a considerable section of the working-class.

But this whole conception is shattered by the facts of the 20th century. Already before the war Capitalism in Britain was visibly declining, and with it the standard of life of the British working-class, as shown in L R D pamphlet ('The two Nations'), that by 1914 the level of real wages had fallen to 90.8 per cent of the level of 1900, and the revolutionisation of the British workers was definitely going on at that time. The war, which was a symptom of a part of the crisis of Imperialism, and the post-war period, have shown still greater decline not only in Britain, but throughout the capitalist world. The position of the working-class as a whole is getting worse. The working-class as a whole is no longer

predominantly reformist and is becoming increasingly revolutionary as the immense and continuing revolutionary ferment since the war shows. The Socialist and Labour parties which occupy the public eye, are not representatives of the movement which they nominally lead. Even with the help of the traditions behind them, the powerful party and Trade Union apparatus, newspaper etc., at their disposal, and the help of the bourgeoisie propagandists and police, they are steadily losing their hold on the rank and file. Their big votes at elections etc. are more and more supplied by the petty-bourgeoisie. The Labour Movement is coming into its own again. It began as a revolutionary movement, it has again become a revolutionary movement. The conception of the Prosecution and the Magistrate (and the bourgeoisie class as a whole) is 30 years out of date.

### **International Trade Union Movement**

P. 666:—This is a copy of some resolutions that were submitted to the Jharia Session of the Trade Union Congress by some of the affiliated Trade Unions. The G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union was one of the organisations that forwarded the resolution on international affiliation. At Jharia I was elected by the E.C. on to a small committee to look through the resolution that had been sent in by affiliated organisations and to prepare and put them forward to the T.U.C. Of course I was in favour of this resolution and I should like to give some explanation about this exhibit. The course of the development of the labour Movement outlined above is reflected in its international organisations, which also went through three main stages (1) The First International (Revolutionary International), (2) The Second International (Reformist International), and (3) The Third International (Revolutionary International).

The accepted date of the origin of the First International is 1864. Marx had much to do with the founding of this International, and in 1865, Marx brought forward his Address and Rules which were adopted in November of that year. In his Address he lays bare the abject poverty of the British workers and places the theory of the class-struggle forward which would form

the basis of International. The International, as it was then, was a Trade Union International and between the years of 1865 and 1871 it occupied itself with linking up the working-class organisations of Europe, at the same time doing its best to assist the workers who were from time to time struggling to improve their hours, wages and conditions.

In the year 1870 the Franco Prussian War broke out. At this stage the German members of the International vigorously opposed War, although Socialist members of the Reichstag at the same time voted for war credits. However, opposition was useless.

The International in France was being vigorously suppressed by the Government, members were persecuted and heavy sentences inflicted, consequently there was little protest against the War. The French armies were smashed and a Republic was proclaimed on September 4th, 1870 and on January 28th, 1871 the French Government signed an Armistice. Following this the workers attempted to put the revolutionary teachings of the International into operation and on March 26, 1871 the Paris Commune was set up, and the workers held political power for two months, for the first time. It showed the revolutionary attitude of the workers at that early date. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, that was "the working-class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes" (Marx, *Civil War in France*). After a heroic defence of the Commune by the workers of Paris, followed by weeks of terrible barricade and street fighting, the Paris Commune was brought to an end. The bourgeoisie Government soldiers murdered all the prisoners they could get hold of, they sought throughout Paris for any man, woman or child who had taken part in the defence of the town or who had even attended to the wounded, and they slaughtered them enmasse. This was the class war. The suppression of the Paris Commune is perhaps one of the most brutal incidents in the history of the class-struggle. The streets of Paris were literally running with blood, thousands were murdered, the Commune was dead and the First International had received a crushing blow.



After the Commune, efforts were made to save the International, the General Council transferred its Headquarters to New York, and in 1878 at Philadelphia the last Conference of the International was held.

The second attempt was made to form an International in the year 1889. The two largest French sections held rival Congresses, they were the Marxists and the Reformists. At Brussels a Conference was held in the year 1891 and there these sections were reunited and the Second International was formed and carried on till 1919. In the year 1900 the Central organ or Bureau was set up. At this time the Second International was nothing but a collection of national bodies which never took any notice of the Bureau, as a matter of fact the Bureau had no power at all. This is admitted by Mr. Brailsford in his evidence. "All its job seemed to be was to make arrangements for Congresses and receive correspondence". The Second International had become something like an anti-war organisation, which carried resolutions to prevent war, but when the war did come in 1914, instead of hastening the downfall of Capitalism, the leaders of the Second International rushed to the assistance of their individual countries, to fight for Imperialism. The President, Vanderveldi, joined the Belgian Government. Everywhere members of the Second International acted as recruiting sergeants calling upon the workers of their respective countries to go and murder each other. With the War the Second International died.

It is important to notice that this statement is a correct summary of the position of the old International during the War. The Prosecution, in pursuance of its attempt to show the reformist wing of the Labour Movement as the "legitimate" and "genuine" Labour Movement, has tried to maintain that the present reformist L.S.I. is the direct and only descendent of the pre-War Second International. The Prosecution Counsel in his opening Address says "Now I have said that this International existed at the beginning of the War. It was also in existence at the end of the War." This is false. P. 48 "Labour International Hand Book", pages 184-185 show this conclusively "The outbreak of the War broke up the Executive Commission of the Bureau.....".

The nominal seat of the Bureau was transferred to the Hague, and the vacancies caused by the absence of the belligerents were filled up with Dutchmen. The only Conferences held were (1) of the socialists of the neutral countries in January 1915 which appealed for peace; (2) the allied socialists in 1915, and some later conferences, all of which emphasised the necessity of continuing the War; (3) of socialists of the Central Powers in April 1915 which apparently did not deal with the War at all; and (4) several unofficial conferences of parties and minority groups opposed to the war.

This is not the activity of an International. It is the activity of the fragments left after the break-up of the International.

The Prosecution go further. They represent the International Reformist Labour Movement as having a continuous history, passing from the Second International to the post-war L.S.I. without a break, and the post-war Third International as an intrusion, foreign to the real Labour Movement, brought about by the Russian Revolution and due solely to it. This is shown into the late Mr. Langford James address which deals at length with this question. (Page 8.)

Now it is true that the Second International was marked very deeply by reformism and nationalism which as we have shown was the dominating influence in the Labour Movement of the time. But it is incorrect to maintain that the only current of thought in the working-class movement and in the international of the pre-war period was reformism.

As I have pointed out, sections and minorities in practically all countries—majorities in some, such as Italy, some of the Balkan States and Russia—remained true to the traditional policy of the working-class i.e. Revolution. And the International as a whole, influenced by this active minority and the vaguely revolutionary sympathies of the working-class, could never descend to the depths which the post-war L.S.I. has reached.

Before the War the two wings within the International were in conflict. The War, the complete break-up of the International, and

the betrayal by the reformist majority, accentuated the fight. Already in 1915 the most far-sighted leader, Lenin, was calling for the break-away of the revolutionary wing and formation of a new International.

The initiative was taken in 1915 by the Italian Party (the majority of which was revolutionary and was opposing the war even after Italy had entered it), which called a conference at Zimmerwald in September, attended by representatives of parties, or minorities in some ten countries, which set up a permanent Executive of Commission (P. 48, page 185). This was followed by the Kienthal Conference, at which the call for the revolutionary solution of the war problem was more pronounced. (P 178, page 42): "But at Kienthal, where Lenin was one of the most outstanding figures the atmosphere takes on a different hue. There cannot, it is asserted, be any durable peace under Capitalism. The only way there to lies through the conquest of political power by the masses, and the ownership of the capital by the people. This can only come as they struggle with increasing intensity against Imperialism and its war so that struggle may be transformed into a contest between Capitalism and the proletariat. The Second International is vigorously denounced and the whole tone of this conference suggests that a great event or a great leader will swing its members into the full tide of revolutionary ardour." "The great event was the Russian Revolution and the event that produced the great leader in Lenin."

The Third International was the result of the developments in the whole International working-class movement. It was not an exclusively Russian affair, or the product solely of the Russian Revolution. This is shown still more definitely by (P 48, page 155). After the March Revolution of 1917 the Zimmerwald Commission and the Petrograd Soviet called a general conference of the Socialist Parties at Stockholm. This conference never met but the Commission held a session in the summer of 1917 at which the decision was taken to found a new International. "The Zimmerwald Commission held a conference at which it was

declared that a new International must be formed; but the coming of the Bolshevik Revolution prevented any further action till the end of the war."

Even in this matter of historical detail the Prosecution is incorrect. The decision to form the Third International preceded the Bolshevik Revolution.

Actually no steps were taken to form the Communist International until early in 1919, and the First Congress of the Communist International (March 1919), (P 48, page 189) was held simultaneously with the first unofficial conference at Berne, February 1919 which really founded the L.S.I. (P 48, page 196).

Just as the Prosecution are incorrect in regard to the origin of the Communist International, so they are wrong about its nature. The statement already quoted conveys the idea that the Communist International is exclusively dominated and controlled by the Russian Communist Party. Now there is no question that of all the parties in the Comintern, the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. is the most influential. This is natural, and results from its greater revolutionary experience and the fact that it is a party which has achieved the greatest advance along the road which the Comintern sets for its. For exactly the same reason the German Social Democratic Party played a corresponding part in the pre-war Second International; and the British Labour Party, as the most experienced and powerful (and corrupted) Reformist Party, leads the L.S.I. today.

This is as it should be, but none the less the Comintern is an International, and all its constituent parties take their part in the determination of the policy. As early as 1921 Zinoviev was able to report to the Third Congress of the Comintern,—*"The leadership of the C.I. during the first two years was not yet entirely satisfactory to be sure, and only during the past year we can say this with satisfaction—did we succeed in laying the foundation for an institution composed of representatives of at least ten or twelve parties, and which has at any rate attempted to conduct the Communist Labour Movement along International lines, also with regard to its leadership ....."*. (P 1151, Zinoviev Report of the E.C.C.I. 1920-21).

At the Sixth Congress in 1928, a full report of which is on record (P 1204), the participation of representatives of all

countries is obvious. Parties in fifty-two countries were represented. The Presidium for the Congress contained thirty-five members drawn from eighteen countries, (page 76). The E.C.C.I. elected at the Conference contains 59 members and 42 candidates representing at least to 25 countries, as an inspection of the list will show (on page 1547).

The principal items on the Agenda were (1) Methods of struggle against the dangers of Imperialist war; on this reports were presented by representatives of British, German, Italian, American and French Parties; (2) the programme of the Communist International; on this the report was of a member of the Russian Party (3) the revolutionary movement in the colonies; on this the reporters were representatives of the Finnish, Italian, Chinese and other colonial countries. A glance through the report will show that the representatives of all parties took part in the debates and sat on the Commissions which elaborated the various resolutions. The leadership of the Comintern lies principally with the Russian, and secondly with the German Party, which is, next to Russia, the most experienced in revolutionary action and the best equipped theoretically of the parties. But the Comintern is an International, and to talk of any one party having a 'regulating and controlling influence' is absurd.

So also is it with the theory and policy of the Comintern. The Prosecution represents it as a specifically Russian policy, introduced into the Labour Movement for the first time in 1917 by the Bolshevik Party. As the Comintern itself declared at its Second Congress (P 2395 "Theses and Statutes of the Second Congress"), it regards itself as the direct descendant of the First International, and bases its doctrines and policy on the traditional accepted doctrines and policy of the socialist working-class movement, namely Marxism. It claims merely that it has rescued Marxism from the degradation and distortion which it had suffered at the hands of the Reformists of the Second International and that it applies the theory and methods of Marxism to the present period of History.

The Prosecution account of the Communist International and its History is, therefore, false from beginning to end. This account was invented for the purpose of supporting the theory which the

Prosecution cherish, that the Labour Movement is normally and properly a reformist movement which is able and willing to live permanently within the system of Capitalism, and in no way threatens its existence. Communism, according to this theory is an external force essentially foreign to the Labour Movement, promoted mainly by a group of malevolent people who for some unexplained reason were able to seize control of the State of Russia in the year 1917, and owing to the powerful support which these people are able to give, contrives to exert a certain influence in other countries.

But not only the facts of the Prosecution, but its theory also, are false. I have shown briefly and I believe satisfactorily that the modern policy of Communism is in no way a new thing to the Labour Movement, but it is on the contrary almost identically the policy which the working-class instinctively begins to practise everywhere it begins to attain consciousness of itself as a class. It is the traditional policy of the Labour Movement, on which it was united and organised in the first place by the First International. The reformism which the Prosecution patronise is a deviation from the true and proper path of the working-class.

But now in the present period the working-class is being forced by historical conditions back to its original correct revolutionary policy, and the expression of this fact is the formation of the Communist International.

### **The Red International of Labour Unions**

P 666 is a resolution calling for affiliation to the R I L U. Now in connection with this exhibit I should like to refer briefly to the R I L U which has figured in the case of the Prosecution prominently. The Prosecution had taken much delight in proving that the R.I.L.U. was formed at the initiative of the Comintern, has essentially the same principles and policy, and works in close co-ordination with it. This is admitted. I see nothing objectionable in it. It is in accordance with the practice of the International Labour Movement since its foundation. That movement has never recognised any fundamental distinction between the Trade Union and the Socialist Wing. The First International was composed indiscriminately of both types of organisations, there being a majority of Trade Unions.

So also was the Second International until 1901, when a separate International Trade Union Secretariat was formed. After this the two parties continued to act in the closest alliance, and most of the leading members of the Trade Union International belonged to the Second International. It is still the case with the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U. which work closely together, have periodical joint Executive Sessions, issue joint appeals, manifestos etc. The relations between the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. are of the same type.

But while it is correct to say that the R.I.L.U. was founded on the initiative of the Communist International, this is not the whole truth. It is necessary to touch briefly on the history of International Trade Unionism and the policy of the I.F.T.U. in order to understand the reasons for the foundation of the R.I.L.U.

When the Imperialist War of 1914 started the Labour International that existed prior expired, as we have shown. The leaders of the International showed their true colours at the crucial moment of test. Acting against the principles that they professed to uphold, they called upon the workers of their countries to mobilise in defence of their "own" bourgeois State. In doing so they sent one section of workers to slaughter another section of workers in the interest of Imperialism. It is necessary for me to make this reference to get some idea of the present leadership of the I.F.T.U. because they are the same individuals who betrayed the workers in 1914 and destroyed the then existing Socialist and Trade Union International.

The War and these 'leaders' destroyed the old idea, although previous to the War these Reformist leaders associated themselves with the idea of class-collaboration, the result of the War and their support of it made class-collaboration their main plank, and by this it became the very foundation of the future International Federation of Labour.

After the I.F.T.U. was established one of its first jobs was to assist in the signing of the Versailles Treaty, the outcome of this was the establishment of the League of Nations with its I.L.O. It was quite clear from this that the new I.F.T.U. from the beginning had renounced the class-struggle. In the face of this the workers

had no alternative but to form a new International that would carry on the class-struggle free from opportunism and reformism, an international that would unify all the militant elements and the Trade Unions that uphold the principle of the class-struggle, true to the traditions of the working-class movement, that is those who considered the class-struggle the basic force in the history of mankind.

Another great factor was the Russian Revolution. Although such an International was not formed until 1920, it was these events that made it a necessity to bring into being an International that would link up all the militant and revolutionary Labour Unions throughout the world. In 1920 the representatives of the Trade Union organisations of Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Russia etc. met in Moscow, Robert Williams of the Transport and General Workers Union of Great Britain being one of the British representatives, and out of this meeting grew the R.I.L.U. and the following declaration was confirmed; "That in the majority of those countries which took part in the War the greater part of the Trade Unions—true believers in neutrality (apologetics)—in the course of the terrible years of the war became tools of Imperialism and played a fatal role, thus hampering the final emancipation of the toilers"; "That it is the duty of the working-class to gather together all Trade Union organised forces into a powerful revolutionary class association, which, working shoulder to shoulder with the political organisations of the Communist International of the proletariat and in the closest contact with this organisation, would be able to develop all its forces for the final victory of the social revolution and the establishment of a well organised Soviet Republic"; "That the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie must be opposed with the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a transitory and drastic measure, which alone is able to strangle the opposition of the exploiters, and secure and consolidate the gains of the proletarian revolution"; "That the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions is unable, because of its programme and tactics to attain the triumph of the aforementioned principles and secure victory of the proletarian masses in all countries." "World Trade



Union Movement" (Losovsky). The setting up of the R.I.L.U. brought a big storm of protest from the I.F.T.U., and along with this storm of protest the voice of the capitalist bourgeoisie of the world could be heard. The leaders of the I.F.T.U. could see that all their efforts to lead the workers along the path of class-collaboration would be undermined by the R.I.L.U., and would expose such bourgeois organisations as the League of Nations and the I.L.O.

I maintain that whoever supports the principles of class-collaboration is a supporter of bourgeois democracy and therefore opposed to the setting up of a worker's state. Further-more the very individuals who make up the leadership of the Amsterdam International have all supported the imperialist policy of their country, and in Great Britain, as I have shown, they have carried this policy out through the British Labour Government.

What do the workers want an International for if the component parts of such an International are going to do whatever they like? Mr. H. N. Brailsford makes it quite clear that each section of the Amsterdam International can do just what it pleases. The sections of the I.F.T.U. have done on several occasions things which militate against the other sections. In the main the I.F.T.U. is a federation of European unions and it can claim to have but very little connection outside Europe. While speaking at the 1927 Session of the British Trade Union Congress Mr. A. A. Purcell, the then President of the I.F.T.U. said "They (the leaders) do not think in terms of the world unionism. They have not taken cognisance of the extraordinary rapidity with which the world is becoming industrialised. They think only in terms of Europe" (British Trade Union Congress Report). This is a strong criticism, and further during his speech he exposes the intrigues of the leaders of the I.F.T.U. in making a block against the Russian workers' movement and sabotaging International Trade Union unity.

Attempts have been made to draw in Trade Union organisations of others parts of the world. These attempts have been assisted by the capitalists to bring these unions within the influence of the reformist Amsterdam International, because according to the Prosecution this is the genuine brand of Trade Unionism. Several

attempts have been made to draw the Indian Trade Union Movement under its influence, one such attempt was made on the visit of Messrs. Purcell and Halsworth in 1927. On the other hand the R.I.L.U. has the affiliation of Labour unions throughout the world, China, Indonesia, Philippines, and Africa etc. And because of this the R.I.L.U. has become the gravitating centre of the Trade Unions fighting against Imperialism, those unions that are carrying on a struggle not only against their own bourgeoisie but also the foreign exploiters. The principle of liberating the exploited colonial peoples has been foremost in this agitation and propaganda; such has never been considered by the I.F.T.U. This is a very important feature of the R.I.L.U. It has carried on an unswerving and constant struggle against Imperialism.

The question of the united front of the International working-class movement which has been made much of by the Prosecution, and on which certain resolutions have been dealt with by the All India Trade Union Congress, is one of much importance to the International working-class. Resolutions were brought forward at the Cawnpore and Jharia Trade Union Congresses that the Congress deplores the failure of the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee and urges further that efforts be made to bring about unity between the I.F.T.U. and the R.I.L.U. The R.I.L.U. and its affiliated organisations have proposed the united front because they realised the need for an International united front to check the onslaught of the capitalists and transform the present struggle from the defensive into the offensive. This approach for unity was turned down by Amsterdam, those who stand for class-collaboration could not possibly unite with those who are working on the basis of the class-struggle. Amsterdam prefers unity with the bourgeoisie through the League of Nations and the I.L.O.

It was not a unity with the leaders of the I.F.T.U. that was wanted, but unity between the revolutionary workers of the R.I.L.U. and those workers still under the influence of the I.F.T.U. The working-class movement needs unity to be in a better position to carry on its activity, unity among the workers is the basis of the class-struggle. This call for unity, the unity of the rank

and file will be pursued until it is realised. The refusal to respond to the R.I.L.U. call for unity, for one single Trade Union International, is one of the examples of sabotage on the part of the I.F.T.U.

**P. 661: Article on Jharia Trade Union Congress (P.P.T.U.S)**

In this article I have supported the idea of affiliation to the P.P.T.U.S. In support of this I would like to deal with this particular organisations, and to show the need for such an organisation to assist the Indian workers in their struggle. It may be of interest to the Prosecution to know that as early as 1921-1922 the Australian Trade Union Congress carried a resolution calling for a Pan Pacific Conference of workers. It was at this stage that the initiative for some form of concerted action on the part of the workers of the Pacific was taken, and the credit for this must be given to the Australian Trade Union Movement, the P.P.T.U.S. has, since it started working, been a bugbear to Imperialism in the East. An interesting point is the fact that it cut across the pet idea that the bourgeoisie themselves had of forming through their agents, the reformist leaders of the I.F.T.U. and the I.L.O., the Pan Asiatic Trade Union organisation (as shown by P. 2369, of page 32); "In close collaboration with the I.L.O., of the League of Nations, International reformism tried in 1925-1926; to convene a Pan Asiatic Labour Conference in order to split and break-up the Chinese Trade Union Movement with the help of the leaders of the Indian and Japanese reformism (Suzuki and Joshi)."

The idea was no doubt taken from that of the Australian Trade Union Movement and to counter this I claim that the above proposal was put forward. The idea of the Pan Asiatic Conference was to keep the Trade Unions of the East on the "right lines" that is on the lines of reformism and class-collaboration. Every assistance was given to the representatives of the I.F.T.U. to this end when the reformist leaders from the East visited Geneva. On the other hand every hindrance was placed in the way of the setting-up of the P.P.T.U.S. by Imperialism.

The initiative of setting-up of the P.P.T.U.S. was taken finally by the New South Wales Labour Council in conjunction with the

Third All Australian Trade Union Congress in February 1926. Invitations were sent out to all Trade Union organisations in the Pacific for a Congress to be held at Sydney, Australia.

As would be expected, owing to the interference few delegates arrived, the delegates present held a preliminary conference and decided to postpone the convening of the Congress proper until May 1st, 1927, to be held at Canton, and a provisional agenda was adopted which was later confirmed by the T.U.C. of Australian and the All-China Labour Federation.

At the same time as the Congress was to be held Canton was in the hands of the counter-revolutionaries, who were ruthlessly murdering workers and labour leaders. It was therefore decided to hold the Congress at Hankow, and in May 1927 the Congress took place in spite of the fact that the Japanese delegates were arrested on their way to attend the Congress and the Indian delegates were prevented from attending by courtesy of British Imperialism. From this Congress was established the P.P.T.U.S. and the foundation was laid for a true militant alliance of the Trade Unions of the Pacific countries, and through the P.P.T.U.S. a link was forged between the workers of the East and the West. The P.P.T.U.S. is certainly not a conspiratorial body. It is a solid international of the Trade Unions drawn from the countries bordering on the Pacific including China, Java, Australia, Korea, Japan, Formosa, Philippines, U.S.S.R. etc. The Hankow Congress was the first time in history that the workers' representatives from such Imperialist countries as Great Britain, U.S.A., Japan and France met in Conference with representatives of organised workers from colonial and semi-colonial countries for the set purpose of devising ways and means of combating Imperialism, establishing a permanent alliance between the workers of the East and West, and drawing in the workers of the Pacific as an integral part of the World Trade Union Movement; tearing down the barriers of racial prejudices, artificially created by Imperialism, raising the level of the standard of living of the workers of those countries which are oppressed by Imperialism, in this way frustrating the plans of the imperialists to use one section of the working-class against another.

D/- 3.7.31.

For some reason or other we have not heard of any sign of life from the conspiracy by the imperialist agents, Suzuki, Chaman Lal, Joshi, Vonekubo and others to bring into being the proposed Asiatic Labour Congress, perhaps it is because some of these individuals are under other orders such as the R.T.C. and the Whitley Commission etc: The Formation of the P.P.T.U.S. had become a political necessity for the millions of toilers round the Pacific (over four hundred million in China: sixty million in Japan; one hundred and twenty million in U.S.A. etc.) to wage the class-struggle successfully, owing to the fact that during the last twenty years the centre of the world economic and commercial activity had changed to the pacific from the Atlantic area. And, we find the greatest contradictions inherent in capitalism and Imperialism are to be witnessed today in the Pacific and in Asia.

After the War the three leading powers of Imperialism; Great Britain, America and Japan were facing each other in the Pacific, between them there is a continuous struggle going on for the domination in China and the Pacific generally. This struggle is for markets, for sources of raw material and cheap labour, and this struggle must lead to war, it is inevitable, unless the workers are prepared to unite against these exploiters. Practically the whole of this vast portion of the world is under the yoke of some foreign Imperialism. China for instance, where millions of workers are attempting to throw off the shackles of native and foreign oppression is today the playground of all Imperialist powers; Indonesia with its sixty million workers, exploited by Dutch Imperialism with the aid and participation of British and American capital. In Korea there are twenty million workers and nearly as many Formosans, who are suffering under the most brutal yoke of Japanese Imperialism. The masses in the Philippines are rotting in the grip of American Imperialism and so on. All these workers have to face the same issue, have to face the same common foe, Imperialism. And the masses of India (though India is not geographically speaking in the Pacific it is certainly in the same arena), the Indian working-class is suffering under the yoke of the largest imperialist power and therefore their place is shoulder to shoulder with the exploited millions of the Pacific. Their place is with them in the P.P.T.U.S.

P. 1728: I am alleged to have said according to translation and the C.I.D. report of the speech delivered to the Bombay Textile strikers, "such housing conditions, their starvation, their low wages, their lack of education, their want of clothes, such conditions of poverty and penury must be removed and for bringing about that state of things, those the owners or the rich who are foisting it upon them must be first thrown in the sea."

### **Conditions of the Working-Class in India**

In order to explain this and also to give the Court some idea of our activities in connection with the Trade Union Movement in India it is necessary for me to explain shortly the position of the working-class in India and its relations to the employing class, both British and Indian, and to the State. This is not out of place at the moment seeing that the report of the Royal Commission on Indian Labour has just been published and the fact that the workers' "representatives," N. M. Joshi and Chaman Lal were able to sign a unanimous report with such employers of Labour as Sassoon and Birla.

I do not propose to bring forward any abstract theories in relation to this matter, I shall give facts. We have heard much about the class-war from the Prosecution side as something created by us, the facts that I shall give may assist the Court to appreciate the existence of such a thing as the class-war and that it is not of our creation. The Prosecution are concerned about the fact that Marx divided the world into two classes. I have already given some facts about the capitalist side of this system of exploitation, the economic position of the working-class is generally fairly well-known but it is necessary for me to give some of the broad facts here. I will therefore deal with the conditions and compare them with conditions obtaining in other countries.

Let us take first what is sometimes termed, 'the aristocracy of Indian labour,' the Textile workers. The Fawcett Committee Report, page 101, takes the average of monthly earnings of a weaver in Bombay city at Rs. 48/- per month on the basis of the Labour Office Enquiry in 1926. They give then a Comparative

table page 122, which shows this rate compares as follows with the wages of weavers in some other countries. These rates are for the years 1924-26 and worked out as follows in Rupees per month approximately.— Austria Rs. 55/-, Belgium Rs 60/-, Poland Rs. 48/-, Great Britain Rs 96/-, Canada Rs 185/-, Holland Rs. 114/- U.S.A. Rs. 228/- and Italy Rs 60/- It will be seen that there is a disparity between the weavers in Belgium, Great Britain, U.S.A. and Italy. The lower wages in Austria, Holland and Poland are due to the weavers being in the main female. I should mention at this juncture that the wages of the workers in the above countries named, are calculated on the basis of the 48 hour week, while the wages of the Indian Textile worker is based on 60-hour week. But this wage applies only to weavers in the Island of Bombay, it is definitely an exceptional one. The Report says on page 101 that it is far higher even than that of the spinners in the same mill. The position of the spinners is as follows.

In July 1926 the Bombay Government through its Labour Office compiled the average daily and monthly earnings of workers in each of 19 representative mills in Bombay city and on page 9 of their report the wages of Siders (spinners) are given as Rs 27/9/11. This is the average monthly earning of a full time worker. I have taken the Siders from among the spinners, because they comprise the largest section among them and receive the highest average wage. By reference to the Fawcett Committee Report you will see that the wages of the Spinners in the countries named are only slightly lower than those of the Weavers, and yet in India there is such a large disparity between the wages of these two sets of workers.

Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth in their "Report on Labour conditions in India" quote the official inquiry and give results (in rupees p.m.) to Rs. 39/- as average wage for all other mill-workers in Bombay city. For Ahmedabad it is about Rs. 37/8, for Sholapur Rs 26. Even these figures of Bombay city were criticised as too high, by the Bombay Textile Labour Union. Women's wages of course are on a much lower scale, and for Bombay city are about Rs. 20/-.

These wages are for what on the whole are the best paid sections of workers. Now take the workers in the next biggest industry. Messrs Johnstone M. P. and J. Syme in 1926 visited Bengal and published a report 'Exploitation in India' (D. 65) which gives the following as the weekly rates actually found prevailing. Weavers Rs. 6/- to Rs. 11/- (very few at the latter), Spinners (men) Rs. 4/4/-, Bale carriers Rs. 5/8/-, Winders Rs. 5/-; Beamers and dressers Rs. 4/4/-, Hemmers and Sewers Rs. 4/12/- etc. These are the best paid sections; but we also get Repairers (men and women) Rs. 2/4/-, Butchers (men and women) Rs. 2/4/-, Rovers (men and women) Rs. 2/12/-, Coolies Rs. 3/-, Twisters Rs. 3/3/-, while some old men and boys are paid the magnificent sum of Re. 1/8/- per week. The Whitley Commission Report says that the time is ripe for standardisation of wages in the Cotton mills, and the Jute industry should examine the possibility of standardisation in the Jute mills. Standardisation on the basis of the above figures means standardisation of poverty.

Now let us take the Mining Industry. Mr. T. I. Mardy Jones himself an ex-miner, visited the Indian Coal-fields in 1927-1928 and made a very thorough investigation into all aspects of the industry there. He states in D. 116(1) "There is no official check on wages . . . The highest rates I found anywhere in the three chief coal-fields were; surface labour males 9d a day, females 7d a day, under-ground labour males 1s. 4d, females 8d. The average number of shifts worked per week is 5, so that the earnings of a man and his wife at the coal face is about 10 shillings per week. It is an admitted fact that the run of wages in the coal-fields does not exceed these rates."

Thus the working miners get at the best about Rs. 28/- per month if man and wife both work. (Colliery Employees' Association Annual Report, 1927, D. 142(17), says, "A man and his wife can seldom earn more than Rs. 20/- per month".)

Mr. Mardy Jones the slightly better wages of the Indian clerical and superior staff (Rs. 40/- to Rs. 70/- per month) and the far higher ones of the European managers etc. and concludes ". . . there is absolutely no sense or reason in the huge disparity between their standards of life and the masses of the mine workers placed in their charge."



Now take the railways In P 653, an exhibit put in against me, this is an article "Worker leads Deputation to the Agent," and describes very briefly the conditions of the railway workers and refers to the fact that a deputation including myself waited on the Agent of the G I P Railway to try and obtain some redress for the workers' grievances The reply of the Agent to this deputations request was very unsatisfactory However, the article shows the wages of the workers on the G I P Railway to range from as low as Rs 11/- and Rs 13/- per month That these conditions are general throughout the railways of India is adequately borne out by many of the defence exhibits Rai Sahib Chandrika Prasad who is considered an authority on railway matters gives some interesting facts in his Presidential Address to the AITUC March 1927 [D 145(32)] He states that the average wage of all railway employees, including Europeans, in India is under Rs 40 He gives also an interesting table showing the minimum and maximum rates of pay on railways in various countries, and shows that India gives both the lowest Rs 108 (*per annum*) and the highest (Rs 48,000/- *per annum*) The next lowest to India is China, at 300 dollars per annum (that is about Rs 400/- and the next is Japan at Rs 552/- per annum)

These statements are confirmed by such documents or statements as the B N R I W U Annual Report 1926-1928 [D 139(21)], page 2 reports that it secured a promise of increase of pay for the employees on Rs 11/- per month and under The minimum wage of the loco staff in general was raised to Rs 13/8/- p m and that of the Kharagpur Workshop to Rs 15/-, raised the maximum of the scale of the adult school teachers to Rs 35/- p m, raising the minimum rates of pay of the Loco, Carriage, Shed, and Electric line staff, unskilled staff to Rs 13/8/-, semi-skilled Rs 15/-, skilled Rs 18/- all engineering gangmen on incremental rates—subject to the maximum of Rs 17/- Similarly D 139 (13) gives certain data about the Kanchrapara Workshop of the E B Railway, Khalasis pay is Rs 13/- uniform rate in the shop on 20-1-30 For skilled men Rs 20/- to Rs 28/-, then after 3-5 years wait Rs 30/- to Rs 51/- then a longer wait (and bribe) and finally Rs 55 to Rs 82/- D 139 (23) Report of the E.B Railway

Indian Employees' Association 1928, page 9, states that the employees on this railway 38104 or 70 per cent of the whole staff are paid less than Rs 30/- per month (Quoting from Agents Annual Report)

The Whitley Commission has made several recommendations which all seem to be to discover the best kind of Trade Union organisation for railway workers, and they suggest that there should be a Joint Standing Central Board I shall have something to say later about these things known to us as Whitley Councils But it is of great interest to know that one of the main signatories of the Whitley Commission Report, Mr Chaman Lal is today a member of a strike committee set up by the All India Railwaymen's Federation which is threatening the Railway Board with a general strike on all railways throughout India Has Mr Chaman Lal so soon lost faith in his Whitley Commission? Has Mr Chaman Lal suddenly become radical? Of course not Chaman Lal is playing the same role today as he played yesterday and he with Mr S C Joshi and others on this strike committee are only there to betray the workers as they have done in the past

I will just now refer briefly to the conditions of seamen D 139(24), Report of 1925-26 of the Indian Seamen's Union Calcutta, says on page 5, "The Indian seamen are getting very low wages in comparison to English seamen The wages would be £ 2/-, only (about Rs 27/-) a month where as the latter got an average wage of £ 9, about Rs 120/- per month " D 147(17) Bulletin no 5 dated 21 9 27 of the Bengal Mariners' Union gives the same rate of pay for various classes of men Khalassis get as low as Rs 16/- p m while highest paid men apart from the seamen in the Dock department is Head Sukhain Rs 29/- In Engineering department similarly rates vary from Rs 18/ (coal trimmers) to Rs 31/- Clerks alone get higher rates Rs 35/- D 147(2) Bulletin dated 30 9 27 gives similar scale for employees of the I S N Company, Rs 20/- for lascars, up to Rs 33/- for clerks

D 147(7) Bulletin no 4 of the Port Trust Mariners' and Workers' Union dated 2 1 28 gives rates for Khalassis of tug-boats and launches at Rs 20/- Lock-gate Khalassis, coal-trimmers and

firemen at Rs. 16/8/- to Rs. 21/8/-. Jolly-boat Khalassis Rs. 22/- to Rs. 23/-. Heave-up boat Khalassis Rs. 32/- who have to work 30 or 40 feet under water.

Take the tea garden workers, D. 142(20) contains notes quoting from the Government report of the year ending June 1927 for the Assam Valley Division. It gives monthly average earnings calculated on the daily average working strength.

	<i>Least</i>	<i>Greatest</i>	<i>Average</i>
Men	Rs. 10/13/4	Rs. 15/8/-	Rs. 12/9/9
Women	Rs. 8/7/3	Rs. 12/0/9	Rs. 10/14/7
Children	Rs. 4/9/9	Rs. 7/6/4	Rs. 6/10/8

With this data has to be reckoned the fact that in the tea gardens the cost of living is very high. Here is given the following as the typical day's food for tea garden workers; Morning:—tea water with salt and no milk; Mid-day:—food left from previous evening of fried rice with tea water, salt and chillies; Evening:—low quality rice, some with *dal*, some merely with salt and chillies. No decent meal even once a week. This dietary costs Rs. 16/- to Rs. 18/- per month and females are often not able to earn this amount.

But these conditions were apparently not seen by the Rt. Hon'ble J. H. Whitley, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Indian Labour. He speaking at the Annual Assam Dinner given in London by the Tea Association on June the 6th said, ". . . there was no other place which seemed to be so delightful as Assam. I called it at once the 'Garden province of India'. He was referring to his tour to inspect the conditions of Indian Labour. These remarks brought vigorous applause from the Tea-garden capitalists. He went on to show that he was doing his work properly on the Commission and said, "I believe, over six hundred thousand persons who come as workers to your gardens and, in the course of a few years, have saved sufficient money, leave your garden, take up Government land and become independent cultivators on their own". I should like to contrast this statement with that made by Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth in their report:

"our view is that, despite all that has been written, the Tea-gardens of Assam are virtually slave plantations, and that in Assam tea the sweat, hunger and despair of a million Indians enter year by year."

Municipal Workers P. 548(5) gives the following figures; in Madras town the majority of the men sweepers are paid Rs. 17/8/- per month and some special section Rs. 20/- or Rs. 25/-; women Rs. 13/8/- and some Rs. 17/8/-. In Calcutta the rate for mehtars is Rs. 12/- per month, for sweepers and cartmen Rs. 14/- and for masons etc. a very small minority Rs. 18/- to Rs. 30/-. P. 802 states that the labourers in the Kirkee Arsenal are paid -/8/- a day. It is unnecessary to give any more data. Any further facts would merely confirm the same general principle. Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth in their report have surveyed the field fairly completely and their figures merely bear out those quoted above. They give substantially lower figures for the Tea garden workers, for others, so far as they can be confirmed they agree fairly well. They remark in the General Statement (page 10): "All enquiries go to show that the vast majority of workers in India do not receive more than about one shilling per day. In the light of all the available evidence we feel confident that in submitting as a very rough average the sum of one shilling a day as the Indian worker's wage, we are not underestimating the position, especially bearing in mind that in the wages field there is a veritable maze of exaction, deductions and forfeitures. At any rate we are satisfied . . . that the average cannot be placed at any higher figure". They proceed: "It must be said with truth that millions and millions of men, women and children get only half, and even often less than half the amount of food needed to maintain the very lowest state of life. . . . It is undeniable that the Indian workers are half starved and badly clothed, as well as horribly housed". In their conclusions they point out the fact that (page 43) ". . . having regard to the fact that in most trades, occupations, callings and industries in India it takes 6 to 8 workers to obtain as much wages as one of the lowest paid workers in Great Britain".

So much for wages. I should now like to pass a few remarks on the question of hours. Hours of work are perhaps the next most important matter in determining the lot of the worker, and the position here is fairly clear. According to the Law as it stands at present, the hours of work allowed in factories in British India are limited to 11 per day, and 60 per week (this is a modification especially made for India, of the hours convention adopted at the Washington Conference, 1921, which made 8 hours per day and 48 hours per week the usual standard)

This limit is usually adhered to so that the workers in factories usually work ten hours per day for a six day week. This is so in the Bombay Cotton Industry, except for a small number of workers. Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth state in their report; ".....the whole working-day ..... which on the average cannot be less than one of ten hours " But there are many occupations in which this is not the rule, or the law, if it applies, is not observed. In the first place the States are not included in the sphere of operation of the Law Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth cite the case of Baroda State, where the State Act allows 7 hours instead of six for children, 12 hours instead of 11 for women, and places no limit on the hours of employment of men. The second point to notice is that the Factory Acts apply only to factories as such. In many organised occupations hours seem to be practically unlimited.

Thus Mr. Mardy Jones in D 142 (7 and 8) shows how mine workers have sometimes to stay in the mine for 10 to 12 hours or more Their daily allotted work may be dug in 6 to 8 hours but because of the lack of tubs for conveyors they have to remain. In most civilised countries the hours of work for miners are rigidly limited, some times from bank to bank, sometimes at the coal face, it is usually eight hours In D 116 (17) he refers to "peasant families living in the mines for days on end" D 142 (17) the Indian Cool Employees' Association report, refers to the case of the clerical employees of the mining companies who work ten hours a day and seven-day week, with no holidays.

D 139 (2) gives particulars about the workers organised in the Bengal Mariners' Union. Those employed in launches, steamers,

barges etc: have a twelve-hour-day daily duty, from six to six. In port it may be 18 to 19 hours work for Engine and Deck department, that is the great majority. The workshop men work from 8 to 5 with a half hour break. Steamer clerks, manifest and tallymen work all hours more or less. D 139 (3) dealing with the same class of workers say that the agency staff work 16 hours per shift.

D 139 (24), the Indian Seamen's Union, Calcutta, Report of 1925-1926 says that there is no regulation of hours of labour of seamen as in England, and no overtime pay D 147 (7) P.T.M. and Dock Workers' Union Bulletin No. 4 dated 2-1-28 states "Men of Heave-Up boats, howser-boats, anchor vessels and tug and rescue are to work day and night, Kidderpur Dock Khalassis work for 12 hours a day and others are to work sometimes more". Further overtime allowance is reserved for the European and Anglo-Indian employees.

D 142 (20) states that there is no limit to the hours of work of labour in the tea factories, "work goes on to midnight or even dawn".

In the report of Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth they refer to conditions on the railways and give cases brought to their notice of men in traffic and loco departments having to work for 28 and 39 hours at a stretch, and porters having to work for 36 and 48 hours without a break. They said that memorials and petitions innumerable have been presented relating to the long hours of certain sections, and that all the conferences in the last few years have passed resolutions on this question.

*Note — Passage which follows was not fully revised at this stage and was actually made on 11-7 but is put in here as this is its proper place*

### **Conditions of Women Labour**

The wages of women are always lower than those of men. I have given some data on this and there is any amount more. The conditions of employment of women are in many cases notoriously bad. In the Bengal Jute Mills for example women are largely employed. (The Statistical Abstract 1930 p. 681 gives

figures showing that about 62,000 women are employed). There are no arrangements whereby these women have leave of absence during pregnancy. Mr. H.N. Brailsford [D 145 (10)] quotes an official witness who stated that "Inquiries into the records of 132 women workers showed that 102 had borne 338 living children of whom 139 first saw the light of day while mother was working in the factory."

D 142 (20) states that the women in the Tea plantations carry their children to work on their backs and cases have occurred of the death of the child. It remarks that many managers and other officials of the plantations keep the cooly girls as their concubines.

In D 142 (1 and 2) Mr. Mardy Jones gives an account of the position of the women workers in the Indian coal mines. He points out in the first place that India is only country in the British Empire where women work in mines at all. About 30,000 were employed when he wrote in 1928.

He states that Government has admitted that:—

"The physical conditions in the majority of Indian coal mines are no longer such as to make it desirable that women should be employed in them. In only a very small percentage of such mines is there any arrangement for ventilation....."  
"In 1925, 38 women were killed in mine accidents .....".

He concludes his account of the matter: —

"There is nothing on earth outside Dante's inferno to equal the cruelty to women labour in the mines of India."

D 119 is a document which was drawn up by one of us on the basis of personal inquiries into the conditions of the municipal scavengers of Calcutta.

The Conservancy Department does not come under the Factory Act, and employs boys of 6 to 8 years old in dangerous work i.e. going into the gully pits to take out mud etc. accumulated there. They are sometimes rendered unconscious by the poisonous gas. Sometimes death results. The pay of these boys is at the most Rs. 8/8/0 per month.

### **Housing and Sanitation**

Consider the very important question of housing and sanitation. Opinion is absolutely unanimous on this matter. Messrs Johnstone and Syme, Mardy Jones, Purcell and Hallsworth are united and emphatic on the point. Purcell and Hallsworth in their report (p. 8) give the general verdict;—

"The housing of the people in our own country is a serious problem, but in India it is far more serious, for disgustingly bad housing conditions prevail *generally* so far as the working-classes are concerned. Wherever one goes in the different parts of the country, whether it be in the village, in the moderate sized towns, or in the big cities; and whatever may be the design or layout of the houses, whether they be the single roomed dwellings built in "lines" or tenements, or the single roomed dwellings dotted about separately in some place, they are all unutterably bad, and cannot in any decent sense be regarded as "homes".

We visited the workers' quarters wherever we stayed, and had we not seen them we could not have believed that such evil places existed.

The proceed to give some specific cases, showing that the rents which the workers have to pay even for these places represent a very substantial part of the workers' income. They quote a table showing the overcrowding in Bombay, which states that 236,783 persons live in rooms each occupied by 6-9 persons, 115,731 in rooms each occupied by 10 to 19 persons; and 31,578 in rooms each occupied by 20 persons or more. They state (p. 9)

"The overcrowding and insanitary conditions almost everywhere prevailing demonstrate the callousness and wanton neglect of their obvious duties by the authorities concerned."

It is impossible to give any complete or even representative list of the other and minor means of exploitation and oppression which are used against the workers with greater or less intensity all over the country. The authorities already quoted and the exhibits contain a mass of material on the point.

### **System of Fines**

Purcell and Hallsworth Report (p. 18) notes "that there are no *negotiated or agreed rates of pay*. The rates of wages are, in fact,



all imposed upon the workers " They make this remark in reference to railways It applies to practically all industries Even the most advanced and militant section of Indian Labour who have by their repeated strikes and continual struggle achieved a better position than most workers in India, the Bombay Textile workers have to endure much in this way

D 145 (37) is an account of the system of fines prevailing in the Bombay Mills, published by the Bombay Textile Labour Union, it shows that the situation is extremely oppressive

There is no theoretical limit to the amount of fines, (p 13) The nature of the offence for which workers are fined are not specified It is anything which the management objects to (p 15) An employee fined is not usually given information on the matter at the time (p 4—5), rules setting out the conditions of fines are the exception (p 9), rules of a certain mill provide that if a worker is up to ten minutes late he can be fined as the manager thinks fit, if he is absent for one day he is fined two days wages, if absent for more than three days he can be fined, at discretion, all his earnings, etc etc

### **Bribery**

It is common knowledge, and is borne out by the material, at our disposal, that the system of bribery is extremely common Workers have to pay bribes to get and keep their jobs, and through this they get into debt usually to professional money-lenders, whose habits and rates of interest are notorious The seamen are especially victims of this abuse, see D 139 (20) and D 139 (24)

### **Dismissals**

Workers are arbitrarily dismissed, often by minor irresponsible officials [see the case of the Kanchrapara Railway Workmen D 139 (12), the Bombay Textile Workers D 145 (37) and the Calcutta Scavengers Union D 119]

### **Condition of Work**

The conditions of work are extremely and unnecessarily troublesome and unhealthy, for example those of the miners (see Mr Mardy-Jones articles) He notes in D 142 (7 and 8),—

"Miners often have to work in dangerous places.....the management alleges there are marked as dangerous. But the miners say that the mark is often put up after the accident.....as there are only nine inspectors for the whole of British India, one may have to travel hundreds of miles to get to the scene of an accident, and it is easy to cover up traces."

Workers on Tea plantations are under conditions practically of slavery. They are kept on the plantations and are watched and prevented by force from leaving [D 142 (20)]. D 139 (17) shows that even such workers as those in the Dhakeswari Cotton Mills are practically under slave conditions; if five are absent simultaneously they are treated as strikers, and forfeit fifteen days' pay; no speaking is allowed in the mill, not more than five men are allowed to meet in the workers' quarters; workers are beaten, kicked, abused, etc by the management.

Victimisation for Trade Union or similar activity is universal; a very large proportion of strikes start from this (Bauria, Chengail, Lillooah, Municipal Workers strikes, Bombay, etc.) though there are usually other general causes and grievances.

All kinds of means are adopted by employers to prevent the workers from organising or taking effective action. P. 525 (3) states that the management of the Calcutta Tramways Company stirred up communal trouble between their Bengali and up-country employees, thus preventing the formation of an effective Union. Similarly D 139 (4) states that the management of the Keshoram Cotton Mills tried to excite Hindu-Muslim tension by setting up in rivalry to the existing Textile Union a "Hindu Workers' Union" with the aid of the Hindu Mahasabha. In this case the attempt failed.

P 1565 shows how the Oil Companies of Bombay imported Pathans during the strike of the Oil workers in 1928-1929 to act as blacklegs. This resulted in the communal riots of February, 1929. Other incidents can be cited among the Textile workers of Bombay, the railway workers, etc. etc. where attempts have been made by the employers to stir up communal trouble with a view to break the solidarity of the workers.

### **Labour Legislation**

In my speech to the Bombay Textile strikers, P 1705, according to the C I D report and the translation I am supposed to have said "We say that these laws are wrong How can that law which makes people starve be called a law? For this law is in order that they should be able to lead a life of luxury after we die of starvation In this way they speak of law But we are prepared to disregard even laws themselves (at the root) We do not respect (or recognise) these laws "

While justifying this speech I would recall that the late Mr Langford James in his exceedingly lengthy address at one place said when he was dealing with the question of the state that

'I suppose any ordinary person who thinks about the State regards it as an institution which for better or for worse, well or less well, is here to guard the liberties and rights of all the citizens in the State and see to the best of its ability that they all get fair play and equal treatment Now that was not at all the theory of Marx "

Of course it was not, and no sane individual who had given any thought to what the function of the State is could be under any such illusion The State is the organ of the ruling class, and as the bourgeoisie are the ruling class today the State is used only in their interests But let us get away from theory and let us examine how the State functions in actual practice To do this I will take legislation in regard to Labour

The attitude of the employers, both Indian and foreign, towards the workers, is adequately shown by the examples quoted But what of the State, that supposedly detached and impartial "third party" whose function, in the words of the Counsel for the Prosecution, is "to guard the liberties and rights of all the citizens" and "to see to the best of its ability that they all get fair play"? Surely, seeing such a condition of things, such an unequal struggle between the rich bourgeoisie on the one hand and the mass of poor, illiterate, superstitious, oppressed, deceived, tricked, starved and maltreated workers on the other, surely the State, in its passion for "equal treatment" and "fair play" will rush to the assistance of the workers, will fight the

employers, and force them to treat their workers more fairly and more humanly?

But what steps have the Government taken to ascertain the workers' point of view? It is well known that even under the reforms of 1919, the property qualification is so high that practically no workers can vote Mr Clow ("The State and Industry" p 140) states —

"The reforms provided for the first for some representation of labour in the Legislature a labour representative has occupied a nominated seat in the Legislative Assembly throughout its existence the total number of provincial seats (is now) 10 "

I need not go into the character of these nominated representatives, their history shows that they are all subservient to the Government Further the system of nomination to the legislatures has had a corrupting influence on the middle-class labour leaders

### **Hours**

I have touched upon the question of working hours already It is stated (e g in the Textile Tariff Board Report, 1927) that it was in view of "the special conditions" of India, that the Washington Convention was modified so that instead of 8 hours, 11 hours per day, and instead of 48 hours per week 60 hours were allowed in India These "special conditions" are not specified but the only peculiarities of India relevant to the matter, seem to be, that India has a hotter and therefore more exhausting climate than most industrial countries, and that Indian workers are worse fed and in the main of poorer physique than most other workers Yet instead of less, these workers are "allowed" to work 3 hours more per day And, as I have said these rules apply only to factories, that is to a minority of workers even in the organised trades, and only to British India

Take the case of the 30,000 women miners, who as Mr Mardy-Jones points out are the only women still working in mines in the British Empire In D 142 (1 & 7) he gives an account of the attitude of the Government of India to this question As early as 1902 the Government was empowered to

abolish this evil. The power was not used. In 1921 the matter came to the fore again, and the Viceroy was empowered to abolish it. But in 1922 he concluded that it would be "inexpedient" to do so in view of the fact that women formed more than one-third of the total workers. A joint committee of the Indian Legislatures appointed at that time decided in favour of abolition in the course of 5 years. The Government of India circularised the Provincial Governments and interested parties on the matter, and these protested. (Both Indian and British Firms).

Eventually the Government decided on gradual abolition, beginning from July 1st, 1928, and ending by June 30, 1935—a period of 7 years. But the matter had been allowed to lapse for some three years, and so the parties interested were circularised once more. Again they protested, and in consequence the Government decided to extend the period of gradual abolition to 1939. (See A. G. Clow, "State and Industry" pp. 152-155, which confirms all these statements).

This is in spite of the Government admission already quoted that "the physical conditions are such that it is undesirable that women should be employed in the mines," and the fact that [D 142 (3)] the mine managers and inspectors are in favour of the early abolition of women labour and are of the opinion that it could be done in 3 years or even 1. Mr. Mardy-Jones concludes;

"When this failure to act promptly in recent years, and the utter failure of the Government of India to issue any regulations from the Act of 1901 right up to 1927, and the present policy of a further protracted period of 10 years are all borne in mind, the charge of the Governments' complicity with the capitalist rapacity is irresistible."

I have already noted that for the whole of the British India, in which hundreds of mines are scattered over an area many hundreds of miles in length and breadth, the Government maintains only 9 mine inspectors.

### **Seamen**

Let us take the case of the seamen. Mr. A. G. Clow (State and Industry p. 143) states that:—

"The consideration by the Legislature of the Draft Convention for establishing facilities for finding employment for seamen led to the appointment of a Seamen's Recruitment Committee which investigated the conditions under which seamen were recruited at Bombay and Calcutta. The inquiry revealed the existence of serious abuses at Calcutta and was followed by administrative changes which have produced satisfactory results."

This is a typical example of Mr. Clow's method of making much out of nothing. No "satisfactory results" have been produced. The situation in regard to the recruitment of seamen is as bad as it ever was. At the Jharia T.U.C. 1928 the President Mr. Daud, (who is also President of the Indian Seamen's Union, Calcutta) said (Report p. 15):—

".....the Government was pressed to improve their system of recruitment and all appeals in that direction have uptill now fallen flat upon the dull cold ear of the Government at the instance of the ship-owners."

The resolution on the question passed at the Cawnpore Session of the A.I.T.U.C. 1927, e.g. (and repeated at the Jharia T.U.C. next year, almost in the same words, Jharia Report, App. p. 54). (P. 1381. p. 115) says:— "21 (a):— This Congress, while disapproving of the action of the Government of India is not enforcing the recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee of 1922 by introducing a bill for amending the Indian Merchant Shipping Act in the Legislative Assembly, strongly urges upon the Government of India to introduce the same in the next session of the Indian Legislative Assembly without further delay."

"(b) This Congress strongly urges upon the Government of India the necessity of setting up an Advisory Committee along with the establishment of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee

as recommended by the majority members of the S.R.C. on the lines of the Geneva-Inter. Labour Conference."

Resolution 20 reads:— "This Congress strongly urges upon the Government of India to amend the Ind. Mer. Ship. Act so as to do away with the pernicious system of recruitment of seamen through the licensed brokers as per recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee and strongly recommends the establishment of a State Employment Bureau at all the ports of India."

It is necessary to state that the Government has not yet introduced the necessary Bills. In fact since 1922 it has done nothing in the matter except to shelve the Recommendations of its own Committee.

The sufferings of the seamen under this system are acute, not only in Calcutta, but in all ports in India. Purcell and Hallsworth's Report states (P. 41):—

"For some years the whole question of recruitment and supply of labour has been agitating the minds of the men's representatives, who bitterly complain of existing methods under which the labour force is selected for employment by the agency of Government licensed shipping brokers and *Ghat Serangs*. Under this system bribery and corruption are rife and cause great hardship to the men and their families. The seaman is charged a sum equal to 25 per cent of wages merely for the brokers' recommendation for service, and it is alleged there is collusion between the brokers and the lodging-house keepers by which the latter also make an imposition upon the seaman, over and above rent, for his opportunity of being registered to occupy a few feet of room in exceedingly bad quarters ashore....."

See also D 139 (24).

## **Legislation**

It would be possible if time allowed to go into almost all spheres of Labour Legislation and show that the Government has

done in effect almost nothing, compared even with the bourgeois Governments of Europe, in this matter. It is only necessary here to take Mr Clow's account (pp 137 following) and subject it to a brief examination. He admits that up to the war of 1914-18 the Government attitude was one of laissez faire, and goes so far as to say that in the earlier period (1860)

"The main anxiety of the Government seems to have been to protect the social system from the workmen, rather than to protect workmen from the social system " (p 134)

So that up to the war time the results of Labour Legislation are admittedly meagre. These results were —

- (1) The Factory Act of 1881-1891 limiting the age of children employed in factories (not mines) to 9 years, and prohibiting night work for women and limiting the hours of work in the day
- (2) the Factory Act of 1911 whereby hours for adults in textile mills were limited to 12

But for the post-war period Mr Clow gives an imposing list of eleven Conventions proposed by the International Labour Conferences and ratified by the Government of India. They are —

- (1) Convention limiting the hours of work in industrial undertakings. I have touched upon this and exposed the fraud of it already. But an interesting point is to be observed. On P 139 Mr Clow mentions that in March 1920 a memorial was sent to the Viceroy by the Bombay Mill-owners asking for the reduction of hours from 12 to 10, throughout India. We know the reason for this altruism. With their superior labour discipline they could exploit their workers to the full in 10 hours, while their competitors in the up-country mills would lose by the limitation of hours to this extent. So even this much advertised advance (it was limitation only to 11 hours) was effected as the result of pressure from a section of the bourgeoisie themselves.



(2) Convention concerning unemployment. What has this "Convention" and its "ratification" done for the unemployed, who in normal times are not negligible in number, and in times of depression a large army? Has it given them an unemployment relief? Or even poor-law relief? Or even registration? Or fares paid to their homes? It has given them absolutely nothing.

(3) Convention concerning the employment of women during the night.

(4) Convention concerning the night work of young persons employed in industries. This applies to industries but not to any other occupation.

(5) Convention regarding the right of association and combination of agricultural workers. Anybody having any knowledge of the situation in the rural areas will know the value of this Convention.

(6) Convention concerning the application of the weekly rest in industrial undertakings. I have shown that this does not apply in practice or even in theory on the railways or in the mines (clerical or supervisory staff) etc.

(7) Convention fixing the minimum age for the admission of young persons to employment as trimmers and stokers.

(8) Convention concerning the compulsory medical examination of children and young persons employed at sea.

(9) Convention concerning the workmen's compensation for occupational diseases.

(10) Convention concerning equality of treatment for national and foreign workers as regards workers compensation for accidents.

(11) Convention concerning the simplification of the inspection of emigrants on board ship.

Further the main principle has been applied of the convention regarding the minimum age of admission of children to employment. And the consideration of the Draft Convention for establishing facilities for finding employment for seamen led to the appointment of a Seamen's Recruitment Committee. The result of this has already been dealt with.

The only Act of importance in this period is the Act of 1924 restricting the age (to 17 years) and hours (to 6) at which children may be employed in the mines.

This is the result of the benevolent interest of the Government of India in Labour in the years from the war up-to-date. Some conventions have been ratified, a few of which in their restricted sphere are undoubtedly useful, but to claim that they do more than touch the fringe of the matter or constitute an appreciable advance towards the state of labour legislation in the countries of Europe is impossible. While in some of these matters for which the Government claims credit (hours, mining and seamen's legislation) its attitude has been definitely obstructive reactionary and subservient to the interests of Capitalism.

### **Trade Union Act and Trades Dispute Act**

But the attitude of the Government is seen most clearly in its legislation in regard to the Trade Union and Trades Disputes Acts. After about five years of activity of the A.I.T.U.C. the Trade Union Act was given assent to on March 25th, 1926. A Private Member's Bill to extend the immunity from criminal liability to unregistered unions was defeated in 1928. (See Clow P. 160). On examination we find that this Act falls much short of the Trade Union Legislation that existed in Great Britain before 1925, and taking into consideration the fact that India is ruled by a foreign Imperialist power, which has imposed upon India many repressive laws, it gave very little or no protection to the Trade Union Movement. It can be seen that it was designed to protect a certain kind of Trade Unionism that would not be harmful and at the same time to make a show that this was an advance and that the Government was not against the workers organising.

The Act gave some measure of protection to Trade Unions under it, but what was this measure of protection and what was to be given in return for it? It was just a matter of supplying a certain amount of information to a special section of the Police who at some future date would use it to suppress any militant movement on the part of the workers. To the unions that would not register

and give this information no "protection" was given, and unregistered Trade Unions and joint action taken by the workers without forming a registered Trade Union would still be liable under Section 120 B of the I.P.C. (Criminal conspiracy.)

Mr. D. P. Sinha and the defence generally in this case have several times raised the question of the evidence that has been put in by the Prosecution in respect to our activities in connection with the registered Trade Unions of which many of us were members and office-bearers. But the Magistrate's Committal Order and your own order of the 30.4.30 show clearly how futile this particular piece of legislation is.

It required an amendment introduced by the Legislative Assembly to the Government Draft to provide that a part of the funds may be used in certain specified ways for political purposes (See Clow P. 160). Even this fund is to be collected on the "contracting in" principle, as opposed to the far more liberal "contracting out" principle in force in Great Britain up till 1927. The Act does not give immunity from attachment of funds, and even restricts the spending of funds of the Trade Unions for helping workers generally in their struggle. It is obvious by this that the Government has power to suppress any Trade Union action on the part of the workers that is likely to be effective.

In clause 22 of the Act it says:—"the Act provides that Local Governments may, by a special or general order, declare that the provisions of this section shall not apply to any Trade Union specified in the order." This applies to a section that allow certain outsiders (non-workers) to be officers of a Trade Union but the above clause is designed to preserve these positions in the Trade Unions for those persons who only carry on a policy calculated to keep the workers pacified. And certain other limitations were imposed on the registered unions and they were brought under Government influence to a certain extent.

An example of the effect of this Act against the interests of the working-class is provided by the case of the Girmi Kamgar Mahamandal (evidence of Hasan Ali, P.W. 245). The Girmi Kamgar Mahamandal in May, 1928 was as a whole in support of

the General Strike in the Textile Industry of Bombay. But the Secretary of the G.K.M., D.R. Mayekar had been bought over by the mill-owners, and was working against it. In spite of the fact that he was in a hopeless minority, and did not consult the workers or the Managing Committee of the Mahamandal he was allowed by the T.U. Registrar's Office to register the Mahamandal in his name on the strength of his illegal possession of the G.K.M. records (the facts are that he had already been expelled from the Union, and was no longer the Secretary) and the fact that he would conduct propaganda in its name against the strike.

Nevertheless in spite of these obvious defects, the Act was hailed by the reformist Trade Union Leaders as a great boon to the workers, and they pointed to it as a sign of good will on the part of the Capitalist class. The Capitalists have never yet enacted legislation in the interests of the working-class without pressure from the workers as a class, this has been shown by history. In the case of this Act there was no pressure, the Act of 1926 was only enacted because it was expedient and in the interests of the employers.

This trial is an excellent example of the worth of the Act as such. There is no need to deal further with it because it is followed by the more important Trades Dispute Bill of 1929. Reference has been made by me on many occasions in my writings and in my speeches during my activities in India to the Trades Disputes Act of 1929. In my speech I referred to it when I said in P. 1710:—"Government has brought a bill in the Legislative Assembly at Simla by means of which our people will suffer greatly by means of which the activities of us people will be stopped. (Here by 'activities' I meant Trade Union activities).....If any bill whatsoever is passed in it we do not accept that Law. What you people (workers) ought to do is to build up a Legislature of your own by starting a big Union." In justification of this I wish to say:—

### **The Trades Disputes Act of 1929**

It was apparently found, after the Trade Union Act of 1926 had been allowed to work for two years, that it did not sufficiently

shackle the working-class movement. In those two years the Trade Union Movement of India had made rapid strides forward, the Indian working-class had learned the need for solidarity and unity of action, and during these two years the workers had put up some of the most determined resistances to the onslaught of the capitalists on their already bad conditions.

The foundations were being laid for the building of a militant Trade Union Organisation, this coupled with the growing consciousness of the workers and the fact that the workers were turning the struggle from the defensive to the offensive, made the advent of such repressive measures necessary for Capitalism. It was because of the fear of the Capitalists that a movement was growing that would challenge their very existence that the Trades Dispute Bill was passed in 1929. This Trades Disputes Act makes strikes illegal unless the employers are given sufficient notice to recruit scabs, forbids sympathetic strikes entirely, preventing even funds being passed from one Union to another and aims at placing the Unions under Government control.

The Act as such consists of three parts. The first relates to the appointment of Courts of Inquiry and Conciliation Boards in industrial disputes. The second declares illegal withdrawal of labour from Public Utility Services, i.e. (Railways, Posts, Telegraphs, Telephones, Water, Light Supply, Public Conservancy and Royal Marine Service) unless each individual withdrawing obtains permission or gives one month's notice in writing, as shown in Section 15 (1):—

"Any person who, being employed in a Public Utility Service, goes on strike in breach of contract without having given to his employer, within one month before so striking, not less than fourteen days' previous notice in writing of his intention to go on strike or, having given such notice, goes on strike before the expiry thereof, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to one month, or with fine which may extend to fifty rupees, or with both."

By this method the employer is given sufficient time to recruit blacklegs who would take the place of the workers who would not submit to the despotic control of the employers.

The third part is the "Danda" part of the Act, Section 16 (a) starts off by declaring illegal strikes which have any object other than or in addition to the furtherance of a trade dispute within the trade or industry in question, or (b) are designed or calculated to coerce the Government either directly or by inflicting hardship upon the community. Section 16 (2) is important and runs as follows:—

"It shall be illegal to commence or continue, or to apply any sums in direct furtherance or support of any such illegal strike or lock-out."

Thus preventing one section of workers from coming to the assistance of another section.

Section 17 of the Act provides that anybody who declares, instigates, incites others to take part in, or act in furtherance of such a strike shall be liable to 3 months imprisonment and Rs. 200/- fine. Section 18 protects those persons who refuse to take part in such strikes from any action against them on the part of their Union. Not only does it do this to protect their scabs, but the Act also places them in a position that even the rules of the Union do not apply to them and further they can claim compensation from the Union, Section 18 (2) says: —

".....in lieu of ordering a person who has been expelled from membership of a Trade Union or Society to be restored to membership, order that he be paid out of the funds of the Trade Union or Society such sum by way of compensation or damages as the Court thinks fit."

It is really unnecessary to comment upon the Bill. In short it is a direct and ferocious attack upon the freedom of the workers to organise and fight either for improvements within the present system, or for a change in the system. Any strike of any size can be brought under Sections (2) or (3) and directly smashed by the power of the State. Any strike which is so limited in extent that it

cannot exactly be brought under one of these sections, can be sabotaged and defeated "peacefully" by the inquiry or conciliatory machinery of part I.

This measure when first put forward in 1928 as a Bill called forth instantly a tremendous protest from the whole labour movement Mr. N. M. Joshi published a statement in which he criticised it strongly [D 116 (11)]. (A cutting from the A.B. P. of 17-8-28). In the course of this statement he says:—

"It introduces modifications of the Draft Bill of 1924 which are disadvantageous to workers. This shows an unfavourable change in the attitude of the Government of India towards labour....."

The Second part of the Bill which deals with strikes and lock-outs in public utility services is the most controversial as well as objectionable.

.....I want to emphasise that the Government of India is attempting to pass a Legislation which is more drastic than the old British Legislation of 1875.....

The second and third parts of the Bill are certain to be vehemently opposed by workers. It is true that the Bill also makes lock-outs illegal but is mere eyewash.

"Even eminent judges in England have admitted that although the law regarding the relation between master and servants provides for penalties for master as well as servant, the law has hardly been used against masters. Moreover in a state of society where capitalists dominate the Government the law is bound to be used against workers..... I shall have to oppose the whole Bill.....reactionary provisions....."

So this is the opinion of Mr. N. M. Joshi the Government nominee to the Legislative Assembly and a reformist labour leader.

The Bengal Trade Union Federation held a special meeting on 2-9-1918. [P. 544 (2)] and condemned the Bill, and proposed to organise a campaign of opposition to it.

The Jharia Session of the A.I.T.U.C. Dec. 1928 passed a strongly worded resolution, condemning the Bill in toto and deciding for a general strike against it. (Report of Jharia T.U.C. Appendix C.P. 45) (D. 305). This resolution was put forward by the left-wing but although the right-wing had a majority in the Congress and could have thrown out or modified this resolution, they dared not do so. And the President of the Congress, Mr. M. Daud, an individual who is far from being a militant, had to express himself in the following words about the Bill (D. 305 P. 30):—

"By these legal provisions the Government practically intends to stifle all sorts of labour movement that are felt necessary to safeguard its interest. If this reactionary law finds a place in the Statutes Book, the Trade Union Movement instead of developing, would be gradually eradicated to the best bargain of capital. We caution Government in time that they should weigh the equity and injustice of the measure and should be well advised by impartial and unbiased opinions before they would rush into such a nefarious and reactionary law....."

The whole labour movement (except the most shameless agents such as Mr. K.C. Roy Choudhury) was vehemently opposed to this Bill, and even the right-wing representatives at the Congress had to support the general wish.

Such is the attitude of the Government of India shown in its Legislature. How is it in practice, in its day-to-day dealings with the movement, in the localities?

Mr. N. M. Joshi, M.L.A. in his pamphlet "The Trade Union Movement in India" [D. 145 (36)] published before the T.D. Bill, writes (P. 21-3) that "the attitude of the Government.....is difficult to define." And it appears to be one of "deep suspicion" of the labour movement. He cites the espionage upon all leading labour workers by the C.I.D. We can cite more convincing evidence. The Jharia T.U.C. (Report App. C. P. 45) (D. 305) passed a resolution protesting strongly against the use of fire-arms by the police against strikers. The Government publication "Industrial



Disputes in India" 1921-28, records 5 recent cases of firing (pp. 10-12) in the Kharagpur Strike 1927; Bombay Textile Strike 1928; E.I. Rly. (Lillooah) Strike 1928; S.I. Rly, Strike 1928; Fort Gloster Jute Mill (Bauria) Strike 1928-29; But actually it is common knowledge that hardly any strike of importance has taken place in recent years in India in which either actual firing or other violence by the police has not been committed.

### **Public Safety Bill (later, Ordinance)**

I have in many of my speeches and writings made references against this repressive measure, I have also supported organisations, etc, protesting against the same.

The Magistrate in his C.O. said that:—"He was garlanded on more than one occasion when his departure for England under the P.S. Bill was confidently expected, and it was said in praise of him that he had taught the labourers Communism." (p. 202). In further justification of P. 1705, how can we possibly respect such Legislation as this?

The position is that an attempt was made in 1929 to add still further repressive measures to those already in the possession of the capitalists. This was by the introduction in the Legislative Assembly of the Public Safety Bill. The Bill was designed to give the Government power to deport "Agitators" who are British Subjects and to confiscate moneys donated to Indian Trade Unions from working-class organisations in other countries. Scared by the mass strike movement and political activity of the Indian working-class that took place during 1928, the capitalists hoisted the bogey of the "Communist Menace" and under this attempted to rush through the above measure.

The Bill in reality was meant to isolate the Indian working-class movement from the International Revolutionary Movement. It was vigorously opposed in the Legislative Assembly and thrown out by the casting vote of the President. Not satisfied with this the representatives of Capitalism again introduced it in the Legislative Assembly in 1929. Many strange and violent speeches were made by the captains of Indian industry (Sassoon and others) in the

Assembly in support of the Bill, and mysterious documents were unearthed from the archives of the many police departments. It was quite clear by the speeches etc., that the employers in India had been driven into a panic, they spoke of organisations and individuals who were "creating conditions for the overthrow of Capitalism and Imperialism, of the creation of "secret and illegal organisations", etc. No small amount of this panic felt by the capitalists has been transferred to this case.

Nevertheless the whole of the Trade Union Movement of India condemned the Bill in no uncertain terms, meetings were held and propaganda carried on against the Bill by the Unions (D. 305). And a resolution was passed by the Jharia T.U.C. (D. 305 P. 47) protesting against the Bill. As I have said, the Bill was again introduced a second time in 1929, but the President of the Legislative Assembly refused to allow a debate on it, on the ground that such a debate would adversely affect this trial.

However the Government were not going to be so easily baulked a second time, they were determined to make this Law at all costs. It was therefore certified by the Viceroy as an Ordinance. The Public Safety Ordinance was an expression of the state of panic that the Government had been driven to and was a further attempt to cut off the Indian working-class movement from the rest of the world.

### **Goonda Act (Bombay) 1929**

Not satisfied with the repressive and anti-labour laws that already existed, the bourgeoisie set about arming themselves with more. Calcutta already had its Act which was known as the "Goonda Act". Under this Act the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta could direct any person whom he considers about to commit an act involving a breach of the peace, intimidation or an offence against any persons or property, to remove himself from Calcutta for a period of 1 year or failing this he would be liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

Such an Act as this was not in force in Bombay and in August 1929, a Bill called the Bombay Prevention of Intimidation

Act, 1929 was introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council, and it was closely modelled on the "Goonda Act" of Bengal. By the Speeches made in the Bombay Legislative Council in support of this Bill it was quite clear why it was being introduced, it was directed entirely against the working-class movement. The mill-owner's representative, both Indian and British were as one in support of it. Lalji Naranji said that the ".....danger in playing into the hands of those who were responsible.....disastrous to business people.....".

Mr. Addyman said: "He would tell the house that fully 90 per cent of the mill-workers did not desire a strike, but were prevented from working due to the threats which he had quoted. That was the kind of intimidation which had succeeded in arresting almost the entire industrial energy of Bombay."

We did not know before that Mr. Addyman was in the confidence of the mill-workers. Mr. N. A. Bechar expressed a truth when he said that the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Indian Merchants' Chamber supported the Bill because they were directly or indirectly interested in the mill industry. "And again we hear the voice of capital through Mr. A. Greville Bullocks (Bombay Trades Association) he said that he had not met a single business man in Bombay who did not consider that the measure was not only advisable but necessary."

Mr. Hotson in moving the Bill was quite frank in so far as he advocated the measure for reasons connected with the strike movement. But the attitude of the Congress representatives is interesting; Nariman, Bechar and others, I. N. Congress representatives in the Bombay Legislative Council, tried to get the Bill restricted to emergency arising out of a trade dispute or industrial unrest only. The reason for this was that they feared that the Act would be used against their bourgeois National Congress activities and to save this they were prepared to throw the workers movement to the dogs.

### **Order of Deportation**

The Act in Clause 5 gives power to the Commissioner of Police or a District Magistrate to deal with any person when he is

satisfied that the person is about to commit or is suspected of abetting the commission of a non-cognisable offence against any person or property or the offence or criminal intimidation or any other offence involving a breach of the peace. If any person is considered to be dangerous, the Commissioner of Police or the District Magistrate may direct him to remove himself from the Presidency area within a given time and not to return for a period of six months. Should any person on whom such an order had been served fail to remove himself then Section 9 of the Bill provides that he may be arrested without warrant and may be removed in Police custody, or convicted to six months imprisonment. It will be seen by this that anybody can be brought under the provisions of this Act and removed at the will of the Commissioner of Police.

Now as the speeches and the reason for the introduction of the Bill clearly show, the Bill was brought forward to be used solely against the working-class movement. It was placing another weapon in the hands of the capitalists to suppress the Indian Trade Union Movement, and to remove from the midst of the workers those leaders who were making themselves effective and giving the correct lead to the workers. The report of the Select Committee that was appointed to consider this Bill was signed by three of the reformist Trade Union Leaders Messrs S. K. Bole, Syed Munawar and S. C. Joshi, the latter writing a minute of dissent. So we find that the Bill found support from the pseudo-Labour leaders; from the Indian National Congress— if it is directed only against the labour movement—and from the employers, both Indian and British stand as one, thus the workers have a United Front against them.

Alongside this special Legislation "for" and against labour, there is always the Indian Penal Code for the capitalist to fall back on and I have shown that in practically all the strikes that have taken place in India. Section 144 C. P.C. has been applied, in this way the workers are gagged.

I think I have made it abundantly clear that the State exists because of the irreconcilability of classes antagonistic to one another, it exists to keep one class in oppression and to deprive it

of its means of struggle. Even Kautsky, and of course the 2nd International, in theory do not deny that the State is the organ of class domination or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. I do not know whether our Indian and Internationalists agree with this or not. Nevertheless it is a fact, as is quite clear by what I have said, that the State is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms and it is a power created by the governing class, and as I have shown it is an instrument of exploitation of the oppressed class.

Thus all the forces of the State are arrayed against the working-class movement, the police, the military, the law and the legislatures. The whole of the State machinery is directed to stifling the growth of any militant Trade Union Movement. And how in any dispute between employer and worker the machinery of the State is always there to use against the worker. I think I have shown conclusively that all this machinery is there for one reason only, that is to maintain this system of exploitation, the workers must not be under any delusion that this complicated machinery of Law and Legislation is there for their benefit or that it is possible through that machinery to bring about better conditions. This myth, if it still remains in the minds of the workers must be exploded. The workers must learn to rely on their own resources, through their own organisations alone can they achieve their emancipation.

### **The Indian Trade Union Movement**

I now want to deal with the history of the Indian Trade Union Movement. The case generally depends to a large extent upon our activities in connection with the Trade Union Movement; and the case against me particularly is concerned very much with these activities. It is necessary for me to show the state the Trade Union Movement was in when we came in contact with it, and that our line of activity was dictated by the need of the workers for better and more militant leadership than they had had for the previous 7 or 8 years.

As the following history will show, the Trade Union Movement in India had been under reformist leadership from the beginning.

It had in its early years been supported with great enthusiasm and militancy by the workers. But the result had been very little. There was no appreciable improvement in the conditions of the workers generally. In consequence a great decline had set in. The energy and enthusiasm of the early years had been largely wasted. Very little organisation existed, and the workers had learned little from their experiences.

The responsibility for this situation we put down mainly to the reformist leaders. We felt that if the workers' position was to be improved and a sound Trade Union Movement built up, it was essential to attack and overthrow the leadership of the reformists in the Trade Unions. Therefore if the Court is fully to understand and as a justification for our activities in the Trade Union Movement I should like to briefly cover the early history of the movement.

The Trade Union Movement of India did not take definite shape until the year 1918. Nevertheless, even before this date there were in existence certain Trade Unions in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The Warpers in the Ahmedabad Cotton Mills formed a Union in 1917 and the Bombay Postal Union was formed in 1907 and so on. However, from the year 1918 onwards there was a steady growth in the number of Trade Unions. One will know that peculiar circumstances operated at that time which perhaps favoured the growth of the Trade Union Movement. There had for some time past been an unprecedented boom in industry and trade, new factories were springing up everywhere, the cause of this was the war. Industry in Great Britain and the other belligerent countries had been turned to production of war material, a further result of the war was the fact that prices of all commodities including the necessities of life, soared high. It was found necessary that commodities previously produced in Great Britain and imported into India should now be produced in India itself.

This sudden development in industry created a demand for labour greater than had ever been known before. The vast majority of the workers that have been absorbed in industry have been *drawn from the agricultural and cultivator class. Because of the*

illiteracy and backwardness of the workers, there was provided an opportunity for certain interested individuals, who were not slow to seize the opportunity, to step in and champion the cause of Labour. These persons were attracted to the cause of the workers on many grounds, philanthropic, humanitarian, because the movement offered good grounds for exploitation, and so on. The Servants of India Society interested itself in the beginning with workers' conditions, sanitation, etc. and made representations to the Government, and was in turn consulted by the Government on the question of Labour Legislation. It was from such material as this that the Trade Union Movement of India got its first impressions of "Trade Unionism".

I have explained the position that accounted to some extent for the sudden development of industry in India, that period it will be understood was abnormal, the cost of living went up by leaps and bounds, as usual under Capitalism the wages did not in any way keep pace proportionally with the rising cost of living the real wages of the workers fell rapidly. The result was general discontent among the workers, a period of unrest followed and many strikes took place, some of which were successful. This may be put down to the fact that enormous profits were being made out of the boom by the Capitalists. However, the real wages of the workers that were successful, never kept pace with the soaring prices. Nevertheless, the successes gained by the workers taught them as nothing else could the need for organisation. This is the period during which active Trade Unionism can be considered to have begun. The two years following 1918 were marked by the epidemic of strikes and the climax was reached in 1920.

From this strike activity on the part of the workers many unions that exist today were started, although most of the Unions were unstable and as a matter of fact only brought into being to conduct the particular strike and were really nothing more than strike committees.

### **The All-India Trade Union Congress**

So the need for organisation was felt by the workers and the result was the spontaneous development of Trade Unions, such as

they were. Those who had been interesting themselves in the movement made efforts to co-ordinate those unions that had already come into existence. The results of these were the holding of the First Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress in Bombay on October 31st, 1920. This gave an impetus to the movement and several new unions came into being, led by certain interested individuals who could see personal profit and an easy stepping stone to the Councils, Royal Commissions, etc.

At this time an added interest was given to the Trade Union Movement for those seeking to advance their positions at the expense of the movement, for at about this time, the International Labour Conference held its first Session at Washington, and its Constitution gave the rights to workers' organisations to have their delegates nominated by Government in "agreement with their recommendations". Thus Mr. N. M. Joshi says in his pamphlet "The Trade Union Movement in India" (p. 10):—"this brought out clearly the necessity of not only starting labour organisations, but also of bringing about some sort of co-ordination amongst them in order that they should be able to make their recommendations with one voice." Hence the motive of Mr. N. M. Joshi and others in starting the All-India Trade Union Congress. We have since seen year by year the annual scramble to be nominated to the International Labour Conference at Geneva. From the First Congress Session up to the Nagpur Session in 1929 the I.L.O. has been the rallying ground for the reactionary reformist Trade Union Leaders to gather on. This reformist and bourgeois leadership has characterised the Indian Trade Union Movement up to 1929.

However the Indian Trade Union Congress was started on the crest of the wave of the industrial boom. At the First Session 60 Unions were affiliated and about 42 others expressed their intention of supporting.

### **Early struggle of the Trade Union Movement**

The Trade Union Movement spread to the various industries and occupations throughout India. But Trade Unions as known in western countries did not come into existence even after the



starting of the T.U.C., as a matter of fact little real organisation as such did exist at all. The obstacles in the way of the development of permanent organisations were many. No definite system for collecting subscriptions was introduced and the fact that industrial Labour in the early stages was to a great extent migratory caused much trouble. This position has to some extent changed during the last decade, and we now have a permanent industrialised proletariat in the large industrial centres. Still, a big percentage of the workers regularly return to their villages and in this way contact is broken with the Union. Although in this respect the migratory nature of the workers has its good side in so far as the class lessons learned by them in their struggles in the industrial centres are conveyed to the villages. Ignorance and illiteracy, the fact that the workers could not even read was a serious obstacle. The large army of floating unemployed and the vigorous opposition put up by the employers to any sign of organisation among the workers, because of these reasons in the early stages there was little permanent organisation. In spite of these facts and this drawback, we saw that the workers were no longer inclined to tolerate the terrible conditions of labour that had been imposed upon them for so long, and there were many spontaneous strikes. During these strikes the worker showed an understanding of the need for concerted action, but the standard of consciousness was of course low.

The years from 1920 onwards are very important to us because they form part of a whole, the struggle between capital and labour which is continuous, and not something brought about by a few agitators. The boom which I have spoken about was followed by a steady trade depression, with all its attendant attacks upon the conditions of the workers. It was during this period that the leadership of the Trade Union Movement was put to the test, and the weakness of organisation and bankruptcy of leadership was exposed. The early strikes were directed towards securing a shorter working day, the hours of labour then imposed by the employers were measured by how long it took the worker to become exhausted, there was no limitation. It was not until the

year 1922 that the 60 hours week was embodied in the Factories Act.

But this Legislation was not the outcome of any act of kindness towards the workers like the Legislation of the years 1881, 1891, and 1911 which were imposed to regulate the conditions of labour, they were brought about rather from pressure from the Lancashire Textile Capitalists and others interested parties in Great Britain, to obstruct if possible what they would term "unfair competition."

### **1921 Congress take an interest in the Trade Unions.**

An interesting demonstration of class-consciousness and class-solidarity was given by the workers of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills of Madras. A remarkable degree of power of an imperfectly organised union was also shown, in so far as the workers were able to sustain such a long stoppage of the work. The workers of the Buckingham Mill were locked-out by the employers on the 21st October, 1920 on a question of "discipline." When the workers of the Carnatic Mill saw their fellow workers in conflict with the employers they decided to join them, and the struggle lasted until January 27th, 1921. The terms of settlement of this strike led to another strike, this time in the Carnatic Mill on the 10th May. On this occasion the workers of the Buckingham Mill threw in their lot and joined the strike. The strike resulted in a trial of strength between the workers and the employers, lasting until the 21st October, 1921 and ending in failure.

The employers had attempted to starve the workers into submission. Further to break the strike the authorities applied the Law and an interim injunction was issued against the leaders of the Madras Labour Union from the High Court, restraining the Union Leaders from interfering with the business of the mill-owners. A further attempt to break the workers' solidarity, was the instigation of communal dispute, which resulted in a sustained outbreak of violence. Police protection was afforded to blacklegs, but in spite of all this the strike lasted for nearly 10 months.

During the year 1921 the Congress leaders and lawyers who had given up their practices began to take an interest in the labour

movement, with the object of using the workers to further their political aims. The fact that many employers of labour were British was used to intensify the atmosphere in industrial strife. This was looked upon as a useful field by the exponents of non-co-operation, and the Congress leaders for a shortwhile used the workers' to this end.

The late C. R. Das who took part in the Assam-Bengal Railway strike of 1921 (Industrial Disputes in India P. 5) says:—

"Not really a case of labour strike but of actual temporary non-co-operation."

Political funds etc. were used during this strike, but the strike ended in complete failure.

However this was only a temporary phase and the organisation of rank and file workers on a Trade Union basis has never seriously been taken up by the Indian National Congress. Neither has mass action or strikes of workers been encouraged by the Congress, either for the workers or to further the aims of the Congress. The reason for this is that the Congress is a bourgeois organisation, the interests of which are those of the bourgeoisie alone. Wherever the Congress leaders have interested themselves in Trade Union Organisation, we find that it has always been to prevent any action on the part of the workers (the cult of non-violence), and to bring the workers under the direct control of the employers. A good instance of where the Congress influence has been steady is in the Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad, which is under the benevolent control of such leaders as M. K. Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. It has been the object of these leaders of this union to keep the textile workers of Ahmedabad isolated from the other textile workers of India. In pursuance of this their policy has been the refusal to join the T.U.C. thus weakening the position of the textile workers as a whole and playing into the hands of the mill-owners.

A serious outbreak of strikes took place during 1921 and the Government report describes these strikes as follows:—

"The short-lived, amicable and successful strikes of 1920 had become less frequent, more bitter in their character and less effective in their results".

Thus describing the growing development of the class-struggle very clearly, and the failure of the workers to be able to conduct their struggle successfully. The largest strike was that carried on by the mine workers and this ended in defeat for the workers. The T.U.C. was held this year at Jharia in the mining district.

97% of the strikes that ended in 1922 were completely unsuccessful for the workers. In this loose way the Trade Union Movement went along a prey to all sorts of adventures and opportunists.

### **Activities during 1923-26, A period of reaction**

This year began a period of reaction, the number of strikes that took place during 1923 showed a considerable decrease, although it had become apparent that the strike weapon was being used more regularly by the workers to attempt to better their conditions or at least to try and prevent them from being worsened. From the strike committees and small loose unions the work was begun to establish permanent Trade Unions. The work of building these unions was slow and difficult. As I have pointed out the workers did not take the initiative, they allowed lawyer, politicians and social workers to take the lead. These persons imposed upon the Unions their ideas, the Unions were kept small for the benefit of those who had started them, their aims were restricted and their activities localised. It was in this way that the seeds of reformism were sown and the rise and influence of Joshi and others took place. Almost every year a big strike took place in one or other of the textile centres, but I shall deal with the textile industry generally when I deal with the Bombay Textile Workers' Strike of 1928.

The trade depression continued during 1924, further attacks were made upon the worker's conditions and the strikes that took place assumed a much wider and more determined character than ever before. This year the Fourth Session of the T.U.C. was held at Calcutta under the Presidentship of the late C. R. Das. The resolutions that were passed at this Session were definitely of a reformist character and no lead was given to the workers to rally

them against the worsening of their conditions. At the same time a substantial increase was shown in the number of Trade Unions throughout India.

The idea of Provincial Conferences of Trade Unions was going and the Provincial Conference of Bombay Trade Unions was held in January 1926. The majority of the resolutions put forward at this conference were calling for legislation, including that for the establishment of machinery for conciliation and arbitration. This conference was dominated by reformist Trade Union Leaders and their attitude in the face of the determined attacks of Capitalism was sheer treachery. (D. 395).

The tempo of the industrial struggle showed a slackening during 1926, there was no very important strike during the year.

The Sixth Session of the A.I.T.U.C. was held in Madras under the Presidentship of V. V. Giri and differed very little from its predecessors. (D. 367).

This year is important for the passing of the Trade Union Act. I have dealt with it under a separate head but in passing, I should like to emphasise this fact that the Act was not introduced for the use and protection of the workers. The capitalists at this stage feared, that with the growing trade depression, the worsened conditions of the workers' and the need for the introduction of rationalisation in industry, the passive philanthropic reformist Trade Union Leaders would not be able to control the growing revolt of the workers. The aim of this Act was therefore to ensure some measure of control.

### **The Delhi Session of the A.I.T.U.C. 1927—A New Crisis.....**

#### **The struggle Revived**

The Delhi Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress was held under the Presidentship of Rai Saheb Chandrika Prasad. This was its Seventh Session and was held on March 12 and 13. At this Congress the General Secretary, Mr. N. M. Joshi is pleased to report that the T.U.C. has had no occasion to order any strike. (D. 399). Such a report as this can be applied to the whole history of the T.U.C. One would imagine that the conditions of the workers were very satisfactory, and that they were ignorant of the class-

struggle that was going on around them. Nevertheless, the T.U.C. carried out the job that it apparently was brought into being for, that is it elected its representatives to the International Labour Conference. The number of Trade Unions affiliated to the T.U.C. at this session was 57, an increase of three on the last year. Shapurji Saklatwala attended this Session of the Trade Union Congress.

The year 1927 saw the end of the period of reaction that had characterised the Trade Union Movement between the years 1923-26. The same type of struggle that we had witnessed during the years 1918-20 began to reappear. This was very marked on the railways where the railway employers had started a campaign of retrenchment, and there were widespread strikes among the railway workers during this year. There were also many strikes among the textile workers, who were also being attacked, it was during this year that the initial scenes of the General Strike of textile workers of Bombay 1928 took place. All these struggles showed a much higher level of class-consciousness. In Bombay the First of May was celebrated for the first time as Labour Day.

The Trade Unions were taking on a more permanent shape, and many new unions came into existence. Another sign that the Trade Union Movement was developing in a healthy way, was the attempts that were made to amalgamate the parallel unions that had been brought into existence, a general attempt to co-ordinate the strength of the workers.

**(Conclusion of portion inserted on 11/7.)**

### **Cawnpore Session A.I.T.U.C**

P.W. 111: The First Session of the A.I.T.U.C. that I attended was the Cawnpore Session in 1927. As I have already pointed out being a Trade Unionist I was very keen to get into direct contact with the Indian Trade Union Movement and to see how the Indian Trade Union Congress functioned. Therefore, I wrote to the late Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Cawnpore Session of the T.U.C and asked him for permission to attend this Session of the T.U.C. This

I did shortly after I arrived in India. I received a reply from him with the permission to attend. It was at this Session of the T.U.C. that I came in contact with many of the accused in the dock and made friends with many of them and also with many others of the Trade Union Leaders in India for the first time. This Session of the T.U.C. was attended also by Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth as fraternal delegates from the British T.U.C. There was also another fraternal delegate at this Session that was Mr. Mardy Jones who was attending on behalf of the Workers' Welfare League. The President of this Session was the exceedingly bourgeois labour leader D. Chaman Lal. In his Presidential Address he gave his opinion of the Labour Government, which is true today as it was then. In P. 1381 he says; "I must warn the British Labour Party that in the eyes of intelligent Indians today that Party stands thoroughly discredited..... the Labour Party as a whole betrayed confidence we had placed in it. We have more right than the Russians to criticise them. They are part and parcel of the Government which governs us. And I say that no Indian can forget the indignity of the Bengal Ordinance. I wonder how Mr. Ramsay MacDonald would relish the hospitality of an Indian prison for an indefinite period without trial or charge with almost certainty that when (if ever he does) he comes out of prison he will be a physical and mental wreck for the rest of his days. And it is Mr. MacDonald and his Government who are responsible for reviving Star Chamber methods and have acted worse than the Bourbons in giving the Indian Government a carte blanche for the issue of lettres de cachet at his sweet will against its opponents."

Within twelve months Chaman Lal was able to forget this and joined the Whitley Commission, a Commission, issued by the Government that acts in the way described above by Chaman Lal. His memory is very short.

The All-Russian Trade Union Council had named a delegate to attend this Congress, but unlike Messrs Purcell and Hallsworth the British Government thought it would be better to refuse to allow this delegate to travel in India and they even stopped the telegraphic message sent by the Russian T.U.C. British Imperialism knows the harmless British Trade Union Leaders and only they may be allowed to enter India.

Nevertheless, the feeling of the Congress was shown by the passing of the following resolutions:—

"This Congress congratulates the U.S.S.R. on having attained the 10th anniversary of the first Workers' Republic in spite of the Imperialist intervention." (P. 1381. Page 110.)

Mr. Chaman Lal again broke out on the resolution put forward to define the attitude of the Congress to the Simon Commission as follows: "From this platform I call upon the British Labour Party to withdraw the two representatives from the Commission. As self-respecting men they should tender their resignation voluntarily. India does not want them, and their own principles should prevent them from acting as the common hangmen of a nation in distress." (P. 1381. Page 108.)

However, this did not prevent Mr. Chaman Lal from co-operating with these hangmen of the Indian workers on the Whitley Commission, and associating with the very individuals that he was condemning just twelve months before.

An attempt has been made by the Prosecution to show, that we are only in the Trade Union Movement to capture it and to use it for our own ends. Then it has been suggested for instance that the resolution for affiliation to the League against Imperialism at Jharia was only carried because of the arrest of J. W. Johnstone, this is not correct as the resolutions of the previous Congresses will show. I want to show that the gradual growth of the consciousness of the movement goes on in spite of the attempts of the reformists to hold it back, it goes forward to take its place as a part of the revolutionary movement.

The attitude of the Cawnpore Congress was defined towards the Simon Commission. Already in many parts of the country Trade Unions had defined their position and were prepared to take a prominent part in the struggle against the Simon Commission, which was then the latest expression of British Imperialism. Political consciousness in the working-class movement was beginning to take a definite shape at this time in spite of the fact that the bourgeois Nationalist Leaders were publicly advising Trade Unions to keep out of politics and stick strictly to economic questions such as wages, hours etc: The reason for this was they feared the mass revolt of the workers even at this moment and took up a definitely counter-revolutionary attitude.



However the Trade Union Congress came out against this and declared clearly their position. The resolution carried by the Congress, after declaring for the boycott of the Commission, called upon the traitorous British Labour Party to withdraw its members from it. And this resolution called for the election of a sub-committee to draw up a project for establishing a working-class Government in India. The boycott of the Commission was carried out and received splendid support from the working-class throughout India.

Other resolution showing that the Congress was on the correct lines, one was a resolution on China in which lessons were drawn from the experiences of China, namely that the national bourgeoisie will surely betray the struggle for national Independence, and that they will surrender to the Imperialists and will slaughter and suppress the workers and peasants who will attempt their emancipation. They must aim at the leadership of the workers in the national struggle for freedom, and be prepared for the inevitable betrayal by the Indian bourgeoisie. Only the workers and peasants, in India as in China, will finally prove steadfast and loyal in the struggle for freedom from Imperialism.

Another resolution which supports what I have said in reference to the League against Imperialism, is the resolution on Imperialism. There were many other resolutions put forward detailing the grievances of the workers generally. A pious resolution was passed about the B.N. Railway Strike at Kharagpur, but no call for action. It was at this Congress that the Council of Action was elected and a large plan of organisation was set out but apparently there was no intention on the part of those who had sponsored this Council of Action to carry it out.

The General Secretary's report shows a general attack upon the conditions of Labour and he says in (P.1381) "during the period under report no strike was authorised by the Executive Council, but owing to very acute industrial conditions obtaining in different trades and in different parts of India there occurred some strikes and lock-outs in which officials of the Congress had to interest themselves." It also reports that during October 1927, Rs.13625/- were received from the C.C. of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. which assisted the Kharagpur strikers, and also a sum of

Rs. 667/13/3 received from International Transport Workers' Federation, Amsterdam."

But in the report I could not see that any consideration had been paid to the immediate cause of the successive wave of strikes that had taken place throughout India during 1927 and leading up to the biggest year of struggle between Capital and Labour in India during 1928. The whole of these strikes under review had been purely defensive, the resolution and persistence with which the workers tried to repulse these attacks, and the sacrifice and the class-solidarity that the workers showed was outstanding. The position is that on no occasion did the T.U.C.C.E., attempt to direct this class-solidarity into channels for an offensive movement, and therefore the workers were being forced to retreat.

P.569 is an article by me T.U.C. must call for action. This article deals with the general drive against the conditions of the workers and the part that the T.U.C. played. It was an attempt on my part to show that the T.U.C. and the E.C. were not really functioning then as they should in view of the resolutions passed at Cawnpore and in view of the fact that the year 1928 had opened up a period of most determined attacks of the Capitalists as a class upon the workers. The trade depression which started about 1920 had steadily continued and had now reached an acute stage in India. This state of affairs affected the most important industries such as Iron and Steel, Cotton, Jute, etc. This condition of trade depression in India was a part of the world trade depression. These conditions of trade had their repercussions on other sections of workers connected with Railways, Transport, Shipping, etc. Another important feature that affected the industrial position in India was Great Britain's Industrial policy towards this country, which was directed to stultify the industrial development of India.

As a result of the world trade depression the Capitalists throughout the world were racking their brains to find a way out, to save themselves from catastrophe and ruin, to attempt to save themselves from the chaos, which is the natural result and product of the operation of the system. This condition of world affairs as I have said was extremely aggravated by the war.

Capitalism in its frantic efforts to re-establish its industry to save its profits etc. resorted to what we now know as rationalisation and retrenchment. This weapon of rationalisation was ruthlessly used against the conditions of the workers in India and became the spearhead of the attack of Capitalism in spite of the already rotten conditions of the workers. Kharagpur in 1927 was a direct result of this attack, and the attack was being developed the Textile Industry of Bombay, Jute Industry of Bengal and the Iron and Steel Industry of Jamshedpur. These were only some of the open examples. This state of affairs was the direct cause of the year 1928 seeing the biggest wave of strikes ever witnessed in the history of the Indian Labour Movement. The wave of revolt of the workers against the attack of Capitalism began during 1927 and developed with ever increasing frequency, with the result that the whole of India at some time or other during 1928 had become affected.

Here I just want to make it clear that this industrial Labour unrest, these strikes are a natural result of the operation of Capitalism and Imperialism. And the strikes were a justifiable revolt of the workers against the damnable conditions imposed upon them by the very operation of the system of Capitalism. The crime, if it can be so called, is not on the part of the workers who revolt, but on the part of those who maintain such a system which imposes such conditions upon the workers.

At the same time as we were witnessing during 1928 the open struggle between Capital and Labour, the Capitalists through their machinery were considering two things which they calculated would act as measures to aid them to put down the worker and keep him in his place. Number one was the Trade Disputes Bill, which was a repressive measure and Number 2 was the Royal Commission on Indian Labour, better known as the Whitley Commission. By this meandering show it was expected to take the sting out of the growing revolt. Both these measures have been dealt with elsewhere.

It is claimed for the Prosecution that we played a very prominent part in this strike wave, in this revolt of the workers during 1928. Well, we did, and we intend to justify the part that we played. The whole history of the Trade Union Movement up till today has shown

a bankruptcy and lack of leadership and the part that we played was to assist the workers in their struggle and to try and give them a correct lead.

The resolution of the Cawnpore Session of the T.U.C. to boycott the Simon Commission was perhaps most effectively and best carried out by the Bombay Trade Unions. This action introduced a new political colour into the Trade Union Movement. A well organised demonstration was arranged by the Left-wing Trade Union Leaders and W. & P. Party to boycott the Simon Commission when it landed in Bombay on February 3rd, 1928. The G. I. P. Railway Workshop workers struck work along with the Municipal workers and the mill workers. A demonstration was taken through the streets of Bombay and a huge meeting was held, and the position of the workers under Imperialism was explained. The response of the workers to this demonstration was rather a shock both to the reformist Trade Union Leaders and also to the National Congress, who had done their best to throw cold water on the idea. For participating in this demonstration many of the Municipal workers were victimised and discharged. This resulted in a further strike of the Municipal workers with the result that those workers who had been discharged were re-engaged. The general participation of the workers in this demonstration resulted in their understanding the true nature of Imperialism and what the Simon Commission stood for.

The E.C. of the T.U.C. met only twice during 1928, one occasion was on the 6th of February at Delhi. At this meeting an attempt was made by the reformist leaders (Joshi & Co.) to get the T.U.C. affiliated to the I.F.T.U. and of course Messrs. Purcell and Hallsworth assisted to this end. It appears that they did not want to go back to Europe without doing their job, however they failed, a strong stand was taken against this by the Left-wing element and the leaflet P. 545 (6) and (7) was issued stating the exact position of the R.I.L.U. and the I.F.T.U., and showing how the I.F.T.U., as an organisation was the right hand of Imperialism. The decision of the E.C. on this matter was that it be postponed, the T.U.C. asking what steps that were taking to bring about a United Workers' International. They did not know that the I.F.T.U.

was sabotaging this unity. It was at this Executive Committee meeting that the decision which elected the Workers' Welfare League of India as its representative in England was arbitrarily rescinded. Against this the Left-wing did not take a strong stand, this of course was bad because the Workers' Welfare League had done excellent work in England and was a body that should have been supported. It was at this E.C. meeting that Messrs Spratt and Kishori Lal Ghose were elected to inquire into the conditions of Trade Unions in Bengal.

That the workers were prepared to take action in defence of their condition, had been clearly shown, at the same time they were realising the need for organisation. During this year a considerable improvement took place in the State of Trade Union Organisations, many new Trade Unions came into being and the older Unions showed a substantial increase in their membership and they took a permanent shape. For instance amalgamation took place between the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union and the G.I.P. Railway Workshop Union, and by the end of the year they showed a membership of over 40,000 according to the Labour Gazette. The Textile workers had developed their organisation under the name of the Girni Kamgar Union (Red Flag). This Unions started during the year with a membership of only 324, the December issue of the Labour Gazette gives its membership as 54,000 and by January 1929 the membership had risen to over 65,000.

According to the Labour Gazette giving the official figures of the Bombay Presidency showed that the number of workers' organised in Trade Unions during the last quarter of 1928 rose from 117,000 to 198,000 i.e. by approximately 69 per cent. This membership had been attracted to the Left-wing and militant Trade Unions and the new Unions that were coming into existence under the control of the Left-wing Trade Union leaders. And this was in face of the fact that the employers had done everything to support the reformist Trade Unions, refusing to "recognise" the strikes or approaches unless they were headed by such leaders as Joshi, Chaman Lal, and others. The most important fact to take into consideration was that these Unions had grown out of the struggle of the workers. This development of the Trade Union Movement

that I have shown in Bombay is an example of what was taking place all over India. P. Ws. 123 & 254.

### **Jharia Session A. I. T. U. C.**

I attended the Jharia Session of the A.I.T.U.C. as a delegate representing the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union of Bombay and I participated in all its sittings. This was the 9th Session of the A.I.T.U.C. and it was the second occasion that it had held at this place. This Congress was held under the Presidentship of the reformist Seamen's leader Mr. M. Daud. After the open Session on the first day the fraternal delegate from the League against Imperialism Comrade J. W. Johnstone was arrested while leaving the Pandal.

This Congress should have been the most outstanding one in the history of the organised working-class of India, the fact is however that it failed to rise to the occasion, although it had met while the workers of India were in the throes of conflict with Capitalism. The main reason for this was the fact that the reformists were there in majority, unfortunately several of the new militant Trade Unions were unable to affiliate to the Congress owing to the rule that a Union had to be in existence for one year. Under this rule Unions like the Girmi Kamgar Union were unable to send delegates. Because of this we did not get a true expression of the feeling of the workers at the Congress.

Nevertheless a very clear division was shown among the delegates at the Congress, the Left-wing were more conscious of what they wanted as a united whole. It was clear that a definite policy against the reformist leadership was crystallising, concrete resolutions were put forward and amendments to reformist propositions were moved and fought out on the floor of the E.C., although I must admit that our position was not sufficiently effective.

Perhaps the only radical gesture made by the Congress was the resolution to affiliate to the League against Imperialism but this could not very well be opposed in the face of the arrest of J.W. Johnstone. and was only in keeping with the resolutions against Imperialism that had been passed unanimously by the Congress in previous years.

The most important resolution was that on the question of the Trade Dispute Bill (D 305). It called for a campaign of meetings, demonstrations etc. and for the preparation of a General Strike with the demands for the rescinding of the bill, a minimum wage, 8 hours day, etc. Unfortunately this resolution was never acted upon by the T.U.C. It was only supported by reformists as a kind of window dressing.

The attitude of the Government towards the Trade Union Movement at the time was aptly described by the President in his Address:— "The use of Police in the B.N.R. Kharagpur Strike, E.I.R. Lilloah Strike, and Bauria Strike, in the name of law and order, are instances of such stern measures.....The Government looks upon the Labour Movement with suspicion and its organisations and the active workers of every Trade Union are closely watched by a section of the branch of the C.I.D. police, and the waste public money by engaging special police officers reporting the meetings of Trade Unions. The above statement is made abundantly clear by this case. A resolution protesting against the employment of police and military against the workers on strike was carried. This resolution also talked of a General Strike. The resolution on Imperialism carried at the Cawnpore Session was re-affirmed by this Congress as also was the resolution on the Simon Commission.

The Congress considered the question of establishment of Trade Councils and a resolution was passed to this effect. The establishment of Trade Councils would assist very much in the development of the Trade Union Movement and in co-ordinating its activities.

The question of the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, and the reformists' proposition of an Asiatic Labour Conference under the control of the Imperialist agents such as Yunekeleo, Suzuki and Joshi was considered. A keen fight on this question took place but the reformists were in a majority and the question of affiliating to the P.P.T.U.S. was postponed for one year. At the same time the idea of the Asiatic Labour Conference was supported.

On the question of the I.L.O. another fight took place. Delegates like Chaman Lal and Mahbubul Haque etc., supported by the

representative of the I.L.O. in India Dr. Pillai were out to maintain connections between this Imperialist body and the Indian Trade Union Movement. The Leftwing leaders made it clear that the I.L.O. was purely an appendage of Imperialism, the control of the office being in the hands of the particular Capitalists and Governments concerned. Darely do the findings of the I.L.O. Conference either get ratified or operated by the employers or the Government, if the findings are in favour of the workers. Further, on more than one occasion the Government has even ignored the nominees of the T.U.C., proving that they only want a certain type of representation there. However, the Left-wing delegates were not strong enough to break through the connections between the I.L.O. and the Indian working-class movement.

Two of the largest Unions affiliated to the A.I.T.U.C., the G.I.P Railwaymen's Union and the B.B.C.I. Workmen's Union had tabled resolutions calling for the affiliation of the T.U.C. to the R.I.L.U. At the same time a letter was sent from the I.F.T.U. Amsterdam asking the T.U.C. to affiliate to it. In view of this the Congress ignored the resolutions of the Unions and a resolution shelving the whole thing was passed, leaving the Indian Trade Union Movement cut off from the International Trade Union Movement for another year.

Fraternal greetings were received by this Congress from the Workers' Welfare League, League against Imperialism, National Minority Movement Great Britain, and P.P.T.U.S. A message from the C.E., Trade Union, U.S.S.R. was sent but this was suppressed by the Government.

The affiliated membership of the T.U.C. at the session was 98,621, but this does not give a true picture of the Trade Union Movement because the new Trade Unions were not affiliated. I certainly spoke at the open session of the T.U.C., a brief report has been put in, (P. 2249), calling for a militant policy for the Trade Union Movement. At this session I was elected a member of the E.C.

The number of strikes during 1928 was 203 out of which only 27 were successful. The number of workers involved reached the highest point in the history of the movement, in all 506,851 workers



had been involed in strikes during the year. This was perhaps the most important year up to date in the struggle between Capital and Labour. Strikes took place in almost all industries; Bombay Textile; Bengal Jute, the E. I. Railway; S.I. Railway; N.G.S. Railway Sholapur, Nagpur, Cawnpore and Madras Textile, Steel workers at Jamshedpur, Calcutta Dock workers and Scavengers, Bombay Oil Workers etc. etc.

The total number of disputes that had taken place between the years 1921-28 was 1598, out of which only 254 were succesful for the workers, if compromise is to be taken as a success for the workers, then the figures given may be understood in that way. Taking the figures as they are it shows that only 1/6th of the disputes brought anything to the workers (industrial disputes in India).

The Jharia T.U.C. showed that a solid Left-wing group was taking shape, conscious of the needs of the class-struggle, but at the moment not prepared to force the issue. The fact of the heavy economic struggle that had gone on during the past year and the mass support that was behind them was not fully realised. The Left-wing only retained their position as the opposition and did not press the struggle to the offensive. The Trade Union machine was left in the hands of the Reformist to sabotage the future struggle. The duty of Left-wing at this Congress should have been to unmask the treachery of the Reformist leaders in the eyes of the workers. In view of the charge the Prosecution has brought against us these mistakes should be clearly understood.

Our criticism of the reformists in the face of their sabotaging tactics is certainly justified and our mistake is that we did not carry it further. The allegation of the Prosecution that we were 'fomenting' strikes is ridiculous on the face of it, as also is their allegation that we prolonged the strikes. Whatever we did was definitely in the interest of the workers. This contention can be supported by the fact of the development of Trade Union Organisation during the year 1928 which was phenomenal, and the most important fact about this development is that the workers were flocking, not to the Reformist Trade Unions but on the other hand joining the Left-wing militant Trade Unions. The Left-wing Trade Unions had been built directly out of the struggle of the

workers during the previous 18 months Workers themselves were taking a very keen interest in the building of their Unions and were stepping directly into the leadership This position naturally caused much concern both to Reformist Trade Union leaders and to the Government and employers

P 107, 43,1628, 983, P 2226, and P 958 – At the Jharia Session of the T U C I renewed my acquaintance with Mr Kishori Lal Ghosh, whom I had met at Cawnpore It was from him and the other Trade Union delegates from Bengal that I got some idea of the struggle of the Bauria Jute workers that had been going on for some months It was forcibly brought to my notice and to the notice of the other delegates at the T U C that certain Union, the Kankinara Labour Union, under the control of K C Roy Chaudhuri and Latafat Hussain was carrying on strike-breaking activities This Union was affiliated to the T U C and Latafat Hussain was present at the Session of the T U C The Bengal delegates who had been conducting the Bauria strike, that is Radharaman Mitra Chakravarty and others, brought a vigorous protest forward at the E C which was even supported by Kishori Lal Ghosh against this strike-breaking activity and demanded the expulsion of this Union The result of this was that a committee was set up to inquire into this allegation In a discussion with me Mr Kishori Lal disclosed the terrible plight of the Jute workers who were on strike and asked me if it was possible to obtain some financial help from Bombay The matter was raised at the E C and I made a promise that I would get this question raised in the Trade Unions of Bombay when I returned I also said that I thought that it would be possible to get at least Rs 100 from the G K U To continue this story I might say that I was myself very keen to see the conditions of the Jute workers of Bengal and especially to see the strikers who had been putting up such a splendid fight In the mean time I went to Calcutta when I attended the A I W P P Conference, and in the Conference hall while the Conference was in progress I again saw Kishori Lal Ghosh and he asked me if I could go to Bauria with him that day to address a meeting of the strikers I told him that I was sorry that I could not go on that day as I was too busy with the Conference, I also informed him at the same time that I promised

Bankim Mukherji, Radharaman Mitra, Chakravarty and others who were actually conducting the Bauria strike that I was prepared to go to Bauria with them. Nevertheless I fixed up a date with Kishori Lal and at the appointed time I went to Howrah Station to meet him but to my disappointment he failed to come.

The next day Kishori Lal Ghosh came to the offices of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, 2/1 European Asylum Lane and apologised for not keeping his appointment on the previous day and then and there made another appointment with me. This time he kept it and Jawahar Lal Nehru, Bankim Mukherji, Kishori Lal and myself went to Bauria. On that day I visited the workers' quarter and addressed a meeting of the strikers (P.2226). A few days afterwards I returned to Bombay and on my arrival I immediately tried to get the matter of assistance for the Bauria Jute workers raised. I got the matter raised in the B.B.C. I. Railway Workmen's Union and the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union. Some days afterwards I was called by Mr. N.M.Joshi who was very ill at the time; on visiting him he told me that he had received some reports from Bengal about the Jute workers' strike that was going on which he was unable to understand. He said he would like some up-to-date information and as he had heard that I had visited Bauria, he asked me for some information about the strike and the position of the workers. I gave him whatever information I had and my opinion as to how things stood there. This of course was gathered by me while there on the spot.

The strike had entered a critical phase in the beginning of November 1928 and there was a complaint from those who were leading the strike about the lack of support from the Bengal Trade Union Federation. Of course the secretary of the B.T.U.F. was himself much too pre-occupied and it was too much to expect of him to do more than occasionally address a meeting of the strikers. The crisis was however overcome by the timely assistance rendered by the B.J.W.A. who at the request of Mitra and Mukherjee had come to their assistance. It was only because of this support rendered by the B.J.W.A. and by members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party that the workers were able to continue the strike.

I pointed out to Mr. N. M. Joshi that the present position of the strikers was critical and that they needed financial help at once. Also that the Kankinara Labour Union was doing its best to import blacklegs into the mills.

At the first available Managing Committee Meeting of the G.K.U., that was on 16-1-29, I explained the position of the Bauria strikers and moved a resolution that Rs 1000 be sanctioned by the Union to assist the Bauria Jute strikers, Rs 500 to be sent at once and the balance would be sent later on if required (P958). It was on my advice, having visited Bauria and having first hand knowledge of the situation there, that the money was despatched to Muzaffar Ahmad. It was my opinion that if this money was sent to Muzaffar Ahmad it would reach the persons directly conducting the strike, of course there were lawyers' fees to be met because of the police terrorism and the cases had been started against many of the strikers. Of course the G K U was not affiliated to the T U C at that date and was not bound to send this money through official channels.

The B J W A was the original Trade Union for the Jute workers. This was known to us, but however in spite of this small oppositional unions were being started, even by the B T U F and of course this was against the resolution of the T.U.C. it can not be suggested in any way that the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal was trying to be a rival to the B.T.U.F, to say this is to talk nonsense, one glance at the T.U. resolution of the Workers' and Peasants' Party will explode this theory, as also will any actual knowledge of the work done by its members.

### **"Disruptionists in the T.U.C."**

P 1206 (1): This is an article on the disruptions in the Trade Union Congress. This article of mine has been fully *justified by the events that have taken place. In the year 1929 we witnessed the most determined attack of the employing class to smash the quickly developing militant Trade Union Movement and in this attack they received the assistance*

of the reformist leaders (Kirk, Shiva Rao, etc.). The year began with the workers of several industries being in open conflict with the employers, the textile and oil workers of Bombay, the jute workers of Bengal and so on. These attacks were in direct continuation in 1928. The continued attacks upon the workers by the employers, their efforts to introduce rationalisation into Indian industries, their methods to suppress the workers' movement and any resistance to the imposition of worsened conditions had the effect of consolidating and educating the workers. The G.K.U. had become one of the most important factors in the lives of the Bombay textile workers and a factor that the mill-owners had to reckon with. In view of this the mill-owners were carrying on a vicious campaign of victimisation of any worker who made himself prominent on behalf of the G.K.U. in particular, or who was elected by the workers as a member of the Mill Committee or even attempted to make members for the Union, found himself to be a marked man and in many cases immediately sacked.

D/- 11.7.31.

The cases of this type of victimisation were extremely numerous and began shortly after the resumption of work after the 1928 strike and continued up to the 1929 strike. The facts about this systematic victimisation which was being pursued by the mill-owners were brought continuously to the notice of the Fawcett Committee which was then conducting an enquiry into the Mill strike of 1928. However, victimisation continued and many strikes resulted, the workers nevertheless were determined to build their Union and were not going to allow themselves to be browbeaten by the employers. This position was brought to a head by the victimisation of prominent G.K.U. workers in the Wadia Mills resulting in over six thousand workers in these mills coming out on strike to demand the reinstatement of their victimised comrades. This demand the employers refused to comply with and instead began to recruit new workers (blacklegs), to the mill.

In the face of this and the fact that this kind of victimisation had been going for some time past in nearly all the mills, the G.K.U.

called a General Strike on the 28th of April, 1929. The response to this call for a General Strike was splendid, within two days over one lac of workers had struck work. On the one hand the workers were fighting for the very existence of their organisation and they realised it, on the other hand the employers were out to smash the workers' militant organisation and to introduce their system of rationalisation. As usual for this strike all the forces of the Government were brought to play on the side of the mill-owners, the use of armed police and troops, the prohibition of meetings, the introduction of the curfew order and later the passing of the Intimidation Act (Bombay) to prevent picketing, etc.

At the same time the employers hired a large crowd of hooligans and imported them into the mills as blacklegs. With these hooligans the employers started their own 'Trade Union' and called it the Blue Union; the sole object of these hired hooligans under the guise of the Blue Union was to intimidate the pickets of the G.K.U. It was at this stage that the Reformist Union, the B.T.L.U. came out openly to play the role of a blackleg organisation. Not to be outdone by the employers with their Blue Union, the B.T.L.U. selected the colour of green because the majority of its members happened to be Mohammedans and they also set pickets to the Mills. The job of the pickets of the Green Union (B.T.L.U.) was the same as that of the Blue Union pickets, that was to assist blacklegs to go to work for the mill-owners. From the disruptive propaganda that I spoke of in P. 1206 (1) they had gone a step further and had become openly the agents of the employers. At the same time the B.P.C.C. carried on a vigorous propaganda against the strike, voting money to this end.

These were the forces ranged against the workers' struggle and against the G.K.U. as such. For the last ten years the workers had been maintaining a continuous struggle in defence of their rotten conditions, during the previous year they had put up a fight lasting for six months and following this there had been strikes in almost every mill. In view of this, and in view of the odds that they had to combat, it is not surprising that the workers should be forced back to work.

The G.K.U. had become the object of attack both of the reformist B.T.L.U., the mill-owners and the Government. The former realised that they had now no influence among the Textile workers of Bombay, and the latter realised that the G.K.U. was a mass union of workers' class-conscious and militant, and that it was carrying on, on the basis of the class-struggle.

In July the Government appointed a Court of Inquiry under the T.D. Act, in reality this Court was to serve as a means of further attacking the G.K.U. This was shown by the report of the Court of Inquiry, and the fact that much more consideration was given by the Court to the G.K.U. itself, its organisation, structure, policy and administration etc. than to the actual strike and its causes. This Court of Inquiry in its report exposed the concern of the Government at being confronted with the problem of dealing with the growing revolutionary Trade Union Movement Reformists were showing that they were unable to control the workers on behalf of the employers. The passing of the Trade Disputes Act etc. seemed to be of no avail, the workers went forward building their own militant organisation. The examination of the G.K.U. by this Court went on to some length and with the assistance of Mr. Mody, the Chairman of the Bombay Mill-owners' Association, they tried to show that the G.K.U. was not really a genuine Trade Union the type of Trade Union that the mill-owners desired. The report of the Enquiry Committee laid the whole blame for the General Strike and the general state of affairs in the mill area on the G.K.U., at the same time the Court made a separate and confidential report to the Government, a very useful piece of machinery for them.

Several strikes took place during the year, such as the Bombay Oil workers' strike. The workers in the Jute Industry struck work in their attempt to resist the policy of the Jute mill-owners which was to increase the working hours from 45 to 65 per week without any corresponding increase in the wages of these workers. At one time there were well over two lacs of workers on strikes, unfortunately there was no proper organisation and no proper lead.

The next most important strike was that of the Tinsplate Workers at Tata's Golmuri, the conditions of these workers are extremely bad. This strike lasted for over 6 months and some three thousand workers were involved. Unlike the Bombay mill-owners, Tata and Co. refused a Board of Conciliation or a Court of Enquiry under the Trade Disputes Act, this was because there was no effective Trade Union organisation at Golmuri to deal with and the workers were at the mercy of the employers. After much suffering and privation the workers were forced back to work by starvation. Further strikes took place among the Textile workers of Sholapur, Barsi, Bangalore and Madras. In the latter case the employers demanded an unconditional surrender and undertaking from workers that they would not go on strike in the future.

#### NAGPUR SESSION A I T U C

In my article P 1206 (i) I have said, 'But I am not as much concerned with the abuse of the Capitalist Press, or repression by the Government as I am about individuals within the Trade Union Movement advocating, as Kirk is made to advocate in these organs of Capitalism, that there should be a split in the Trade Union Movement. Mr Kirk apparently is not prepared, it seems by his statement to abide by a majority decision.' My estimation as to what these disrupters intended to do has already been clearly shown.

This brings us to one of the most important landmarks in the history of the Trade Union Movement in India, this is the 10th Session of the A I T U C which took place in December 1929 at Nagpur. During the ten years of the existence of the T U C the workers had gradually begun to assert themselves and the movement was taking proper shape. Within the T U C there had crystallised a definite Left-wing element with its roots well down among the workers. Trade Unions had come into existence which accepted the principles of and were born out of the class-struggle. Further the general situation was characterised by an over-sharpening of the class-struggle as a result of the appalling conditions of the workers and the widespread unemployment caused by the intensified exploitation by both British and Indian capital. Against these conditions the workers had put up a struggle.



more vigorous and more determined than ever before, and during the recent years the struggle was characterised by several important features. The fact is that the Strike Committees which were elected, were by and from the rank and file of the striking workers, and it was these that gave birth to the militant Trade Unions, inspiring the workers with class-consciousness and urging the workers on to independent working-class action. Apart from the great sacrifices and privations that the workers underwent during these determined struggles, the differentiation in the Labour Movement was accelerated. It was this that was given expression to at the Nagpur Session of the T.U.C.

The largest number of organised workers ever represented at any session of the A.I.T.U.C. were represented at this Session, 50 Unions with a membership of 188,436 were represented, out of which a majority were organised in militant Left-wing Trade Unions, including the G.K.U. and the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union. It was at this Congress that a real effort was made to end the policy of vacillation which had been followed in the past, and to give a definite working-class lead. The following were some of the resolutions that were put forward at the Congress and supported by a majority; affiliation to the P.P.T.U.S., boycott of the Royal Whitley Commission, affiliation to the League against Imperialism, reappointing the Workers' Welfare League of India as its agent in Great Britain; no nominations to the Government for the I.L.O., condemnation of the R.T.C. etc.

The above programme of resolutions coupled with the knowledge that the Left-wing element had a majority threw the Reformists Joshi and Co. into a panic. In the E.C. meeting the whole of these resolutions were carried, the policy of class-collaboration was ended, the leaders who had been carrying on a policy of compromise and sabotage of the workers' struggle were thrown over board. Thus the history of the Indian Trade Union Movement entered on another phase. As a result of the passing by the E.C. of these resolutions which were binding the Trade Union Movement to a militant and forward policy, the refusal to send delegates to the I.L.O., the boycott of the Whitley Commission and the R.T.C. meant a refusal to participate in a policy of class collaboration with Capitalism. The affiliation to the

P.P.T.U.S., and the L.A.I. etc. meant collaboration with the revolutionary working-class throughout the world on an Anti-imperialist front. In view of this policy Messrs Chaman Lal, N.M. Joshi, V.V. Giri, Shiva Rao, S.C. Joshi and others seceded from the T.U.C. with their Unions. Thus the reformist leaders were guilty of a further crime against the working-class of definitely splitting and wrecking the working-class movement in the face of the enemy, and of setting up a rival All-India Trade Union Movement.

The seceders issued a statement to the Congress in which they explained their action. The reasons for seceding, however, were soon shown at a meeting hurriedly held by them at Nagpur to establish their rival organisation which was named the Indian Trade Union Federation. The resolutions passed at this meeting exposed thoroughly their reasons for seceding. Out of 8 resolutions carried at this meeting four dealt with the formation of the Federation, the other four are as follows:—

(1) Resolved that no Union or man with communistic tendencies be affiliated to the Federation, (2) Decision to co-operate with the Royal Commission on Indian Labour, (3) Welcomes the statement of H.E. the Viceroy regarding the R.T.C and asks for representation thereon, (4) Last but not least, names are recommended for the annual joyride to attend the I.L.O Conference at Geneva. The founders of the Federation had no time to give for the consideration of the workers' struggle, but of course they are not a part of it. Thus my prediction in P. 1206 had come true, the reformist disruptionists had been successful in splitting the T.U.C.

In the meantime, the T.U.C. with its new leadership prepared for action, which however was cramped owing to the Congress influence remaining therein, Jawahar Lal Nehru the outgoing President and Subhas Bose the incoming President. Subhas Bose, whose attitude had been made sufficiently clear even before he had been elected as President, had been propagating the idea of suppression of the differences between the revolutionary and the reformist elements in the Labour Movement, and his liking for Fascism.

The Congress influence remained in the T.U.C. along side the militant section because it had no other alternative owing to the political situation in the country, the boycott of the Whitley Commission and the Round Table Conference had to be supported, and it was only for this reason that they remained with the militant element as was shown by the fact that they would not support the resolution in respect of affiliation to the P.P.T.U.S in the open session and this had to be postponed for one year.

Apart from the other resolutions which included those already mentioned and which were passed, a manifesto was issued in answer to the splitting policy of the reformist agents of Capitalism. This manifesto pointed out the forces that were ranged against the workers' struggle, the united efforts of Indian Capitalism and British Imperialism. How the workers had failed in the past to maintain even their miserable standard owing to the lack of united organisation, concentrated action and militant leadership. That the reformists were opposed to this kind of organisation and action which forced them to secede from the Congress, but still they wanted to fool the workers with the Whitley Commission and the Round Table Conference appointed by British Imperialism.

The reformist split the T.U.C. in order to weaken the economic and political struggle of the Indian workers, and in so doing help British Imperialism and the Indian Capitalists. The Nagpur Session showed more clearly than ever the necessity of developing the militant working-class leadership from the rank and file of the workers themselves who alone will stand true to the interests of the working-class. The betrayal of the workers by the reformists who wanted the workers to pin their faith to Geneva, the Legislative Assembly and Royal Commissions, was clear. On the other hand the growing class-consciousness of the workers gave at this Congress a definite lead to the workers to build their own militant class organisations ready to face up this struggle.

### THE G.I.P. RAILWAY WORKERS' STRIKE 1930

The workers had not to wait long before another test was made. the G.I.P. Railway workers gave the lead in February, 1930. On the 14th of February a General Strike was declared on the G.I.P.

Railway, at first this was understood to be only a one day strike but at the last moment it was decided to continue it, thus confusion was caused from the beginning I should like to say here that I admit what ever evidence there is connecting me with the G I P Railwaymen's Union, I was the Vice-President of this organisation at the time of my arrest The intention of the Union before our arrest when a Strike Committee had been elected was to prepare for a general strike on the railways The response to the call of the G I P Railwaymen's Union for this general strike in February was satisfactory, over 40,000 workers came out

There is no need to go into the causes of the strike, for over three years the workers had made numerous attempts to get their grievances redressed and to obtain better conditions, both through their Union to the Agent of the Railway and through the All-India Railwaymen's Federation to the Railway Board but no satisfaction could be got • On several occasions between September 1928 and September 1929 deputations of the A I R F waited upon the Railway Board At the meeting of the General Council of the Federation on September 29th, 1929 the reply of Sir George Rainny, the Railway Member of the Government of India, was characterised as "unsatisfactory and highly insulting and provocative" The General Council therefore, called upon the Railwaymen of India and the affiliated unions to prepare themselves for direct action" The General Council further appointed a Propaganda Committee and gave an ultimatum to the Government of India and the Railway Board that failure to grant the demands of the railway workers within three months would compel the Railwaymen "to declare a General Strike on all the railways in India"

It will be seen that by deciding on the General Strike on the G I P Railway, the Union had given the Government and the Railway Board five months to make up their minds It also shows that the leaders of the A I R F were not serious when they gave the ultimatum in September 1929 and had no intention of calling a General Strike at all They wanted to carry on further negotiations and eventually betray the workers

### **The Reformist Splitters at Work**

When the strike was declared on the G I P Railway, N M Joshi, Bakhale, Jamnadas Metha, S C Joshi etc began their

strike-breaking tactics through the small G.I.P. Staff Union. The cause of the failure of the previous strikes of railway workers, B.N.R. Kharagpur 1927, E.I.R. Lillooah 1928, and S.I.R. were in the main due to the fact that the reformist leaders had worked to keep these strikes localised, in other words they had prevented other workers coming to the assistance of these workers who were on strike. Had other workers on the railways, all of which had exactly the same grievances, been allowed to join in the struggle, greater pressure could have been brought to bear. However, in the case of the G.I.P. Railway strike they went one step further and carried on a vigorous propaganda among the workers to get them to remain loyal to the employers and remain at work. They joined hands with the capitalists in declaring that the strike was not a genuine Trade dispute. (All the above mentioned are members of the Federation.) With their hands strengthened by this betrayal by the reformists within the ranks of the workers, the Government and the Railway Board stiffened their attitude and set about the task of defeating the workers once and for all, and breaking the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union. The Government stepped in and railway workers and their leaders were arrested at almost all the railway centres. With the help of the Staff Union and the recruitment of new blacklegs certain of the services were maintained.

On March 1st Messrs Joshi, Giri and Chaman Lal approached the Railway Board, over the heads of the strikers, for a settlement. What sort of settlement could these people who were breaking the strike obtain? At the same time confusion was caused by the President of the Union agreeing to certain terms. At the meeting of the strikers held in Bombay on the 7th of April to discuss the situation the Police opened fire and seven strikers were injured, two very seriously. On the 16th of April representatives from all centres were called to Bombay and at that meeting a decision was taken to call off the strike unconditionally, and so ended another valiant fight of the workers, defeated but not subdued by the joint efforts of the reformist Trade Union leaders and the employers. Thousands of workers were victimised, thrown out of employment and out of their homes, and dozens of workers and their leaders were in jail. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the President of that

T.U.C. at the time and the President of the Indian National Congress, did nothing to bring assistance to the G.I.P. Railway workers.

The position of the railway workers has gone steadily from bad to worse; apart from the thousands of workers that were victimised last year owing to the betrayal of the G.I.P. Railway workers, thirty-five thousand more were retrenched up to May this year. The Railway Board now announces that they intend to retrench another thirty thousand. On top of this the A.I.R.F. could not obtain any redress for the grievances of the railway workers. In desperation, the Federation appointed a Committee of Action with among others the following members on it, Giri, Jamnadas Metha, S.C. Joshi, Chaman Lal, all of whom assisted in the betrayal of the G.I.P. railway workers last year and were responsible for the heavy victimisation. Now the position is that we support the call for a general strike today as we did then, but the above persons are not honest in their call for a general strike. They are only using such militant phraseology to maintain their leadership over the workers and to ultimately betray them, as they have done before. In this case we have not had to wait long for the results, the first steps towards this betrayal were taken on the 7th of June when this Committee of Action headed by Jamnadas Metha met the Railway Board and agreed to terms which mean that, victimised and retrenched workers on the G.I.P. will remain unemployed, workers already under notice will be retrenched and even a suggestion for a wage reduction is accepted and in fact general retrenchment will go on.

During this year a fight was put up by the Bengal Jute workers and over one lac were on strike. Section 144 was applied and the workers' meetings were prevented. Strikes also occurred on the N.G.S. Railway, the B.N.R. Workshop, the E.I.R. Workshops etc. Disruptive activities were carried on during the year among the Bombay textile workers by a small group of opportunists who were connected with G.K.U. Khandalkar, Shaikh, Kabadi and others. In the first place their object seemed to be to tie the workers' organisation to the tail of the Indian National Congress and its Civil Disobedience Campaign, from this was developed disruptive and splitting tactics. The unfortunate state of organisation among the Bombay textile workers today must be in the main laid at the door of these disrupters.

As I have said in P. 1206 "they concentrated on making the T.U. movement of India a live body, an active body. Their object was to make the Congress reflect the feelings and wishes of the workers who were today living in slavery". This idea was put into operation at a meeting of the E.C. of the T.U.C. held in Calcutta which considered the effect of the worsening conditions of the workers and the widespread unemployment, and the facts that the workers had shown that they were prepared to take action by the continuous strikes which had taken place. The E.C. decided to prepare the workers for a general strike. In pursuance of this a programme of demands and organisation etc. was put forward and accepted by the E.C.

This brought the reformists in the movement to their feet, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta who had recently been showing a certain interest in the Trade Union Movement, protested against the call for a general strike by the E.C. and pointed out the illegality of the same under the Trade Disputes Act of 1929. This was of course before he went on to the Committee of Action for the railway workers to prepare them for a general strike. Such legal luminaries are a definite harm to the workers. He said that he wanted to hear more about unity and was anxiously waiting to hear what was to be done about the healing of the split which took place at Nagpur. This concern of the reformists was to recapture the T.U.C.

### **The need for unity among the workers on a Class basis**

The desire for unity was mutual from all sides in the movement but for different reasons. The reformists wanted unity of the leaders and not of the rank and file, to prevent any decisive action on the part of the workers, on the other hand the militant Left-wing wanted unity of the rank and file to be able to take some decisive action for the betterment of the conditions of the workers. The struggle between the reformists and the Left-wing sections began to take a concrete form at Jharia and I expressed certain opinions in reference to the same in P. 1896 (The Communists in the Trade Union Movement). This was the position in 1928 and which led up to the Nagpur split, the position could be foreseen then.

The important influences in the Trade Union Movement today come under three heads:—

(1) The Congress influence dominated by Subhas Bose, Ruikar, Shaikh, Jammadas Mehta and others who have obtained a position in the movement for some of its members on the basis of the use of Left phrases in the political field (Independence, full-blooded socialism, etc). In reality they represent in the workers' movement the influence of the Indian capitalists and merchants and they play the role of reformists in the movement on behalf of these people.

During the 11th Session of the A.I.T.U.C. recently held in Calcutta this group thoroughly exposed itself. Mr. Subhas Bose in his Presidential Address called upon the T.U.C. to retreat to a position even worse than that which was held before Nagpur, and to allow delegates to be nominated to the Imperialist I.L.O. Geneva—perhaps he was even considering himself as a nominee. In so many words he supported the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and appeared to be angling after a seat on the Round Table Conference. Having supported the betrayal of the national struggle against British Imperialism at Karachi, he was now trying to lead the T.U.C. into the same trap. The veneer of Subhas Bose is too thin, the workers know that the R.T.C. means co-operation with British Imperialism and they have nothing to gain by this. Therefore, they are not going to allow the T.U.C to be so easily betrayed.

He then brings out in his speech the strange theory that the T.U.C. is "public property". This is sheer nonsense. The T.U.C. is an organisation of the workers and belongs to them alone. There was a clear attempt at this session to bring the T.U.C. under the wing of the Indian National Congress but this fortunately has been foiled. It must have been very interesting however to hear Mr. Subhas Bose trying to define his exact stand, and in a speech he makes the following feeble effort "There is on the one hand the Right-wing who stand for a reformist programme, above everything else. On the other side there are our Communist friends who, if I understood them aright, are close adherents and followers of Moscow. Between these two groups, stands another group which stands for socialism—full-blooded socialism—but which desires that India should evolve her own form of socialism as well as her own methods. To this group I humbly claim to belong".



I have never heard such undiluted humbug given out to define one's position, and gull the workers. I say quite definitely that there is no middle course for the workers, Subhas Bose's "full-blooded socialism" is simply a definition of his type of Fascism, nothing more and nothing less. Then he says "India will have to evolve her own methods", there is only one method for the workers the world over and that is the class-struggle. It has become very cheap for persons in India now-a-days to say they are socialists without even caring or wanting to know what socialism really is. Again, I say that this talk of socialism from Subhas Bose is undiluted humbug and such terms are only used to mislead the workers. All those persons that followed Subhas Bose in his disruptive tactics at the recent T.U.C. and who have set up a rival "T.U.C." come into the same category. Their "T.U.C." will no doubt, as Mr. Bose said, be able to understand the difficulties of the employers.

(2) In the T.U. Federation we have the influence of the Liberal Federation which dominates, some Congress influence there is in some of the Unions affiliated to the Federation but this plays second fiddle of the influence from the Liberal Federation dominated by N. M. Joshi, Bekhale, Shiv Rao etc. This influence represents that of the Indian bourgeoisie, big industrialists etc., who are always prepared to co-operate with British Imperialism, and their role is to obtain a few minor reforms and at the same time the price for this is that they are there to betray the working-class-struggle. The Trade Unionism of this leadership has been aptly defined in the Indian Industries Association Bulletin No. 21 which is based upon the suppression of any communistic principles and the bringing about of "friendly relations between the employers and the employees", in fact educating the workers to be satisfied with their lot.

I will here just mention another influence not definite enough to be placed in any particular group, floating from one section to another, supporting one day the reformist view point and another day the revolutionary view point, an element that is most uncertain and most dangerous, and which is always apparent where there is the petty bourgeois influence in the working-class

movement. The element that I refer to now is that which, when it suits their purpose, will use revolutionary slogans and phrases to attract the workers, and would say that the communists have now got the monopoly of this theory or that slogan. This element that desires to play with militant slogans and use militant phraseology as a means to rally the workers round them is not sincere because they do not believe in the slogans that they use, and they do not believe in the class-struggle. This element is most dangerous because at the crucial moment it is this element that betrays the workers in the most flagrant manner.

(3) The most important influence, however, in the Trade Union Movement is that of the Communists, whose programme is based on the class-struggle. This is the leadership truly representative of the working-class and is the influence of the workers themselves.

The question of unity after Nagpur, and now after Calcutta, is not merely a matter of obtaining some measure of agreement between the leaders of the above groups because in the first place, the first two groups are both reformists and there is little or no difference between them. On the other hand, the latter cannot in any way allow its platform to be watered down for the sake of unity at the top between themselves and a group of reformist leaders. The unity that the communist must work for from now on, is the unity of the rank and file of the workers on the basis of the class-struggle.

### **The Workers' struggle in the Textile (Cotton) Industry**

A larger number of exhibits have been put in by the prosecution to prove my connection with the 1928 textile workers' strike in Bombay and with the Girni Kamgar Union. The Magistrate in his Committal Order (page 154) has used an article alleged to have been written by me, P. 1035, to show that propaganda was being carried on by the W. and P. Party among the mill workers of Bombay, and he quotes thus:—"that the only effective method to stop this attack (viz. of the employers) was by the united stand of the workers i.e. a General Strike, although some prominent T U leaders were opposing this (P. 1035), and in their speeches they took credit to themselves for prolonging the strike". Then he says

that they held meetings, they organised a strike fund and arranged the conveyance of strikers back to their villages. Then he asks two questions. "What then was the meaning of their activity? Was it merely an attempt to carry out a strike on ordinary Trade Union lines or was it something deeper?"

Now, I want to try and reply to these questions. The Magistrate suggests that it is not necessary to argue that the workers had real grievances. He says that this argument misunderstands the line taken by the Prosecution. Now I quite understand the line taken by the Prosecution after these 28 months as an undertrial, but I cannot state my case unless I am allowed to put forward the full facts. In other words it is of no use taking the mustard without the beef.

It is absolutely necessary if I am to reply to the above questions, and to put the Court in possession of the full facts and to justify my activities in one of the biggest strikes that have taken place in India, the Bombay mill-workers strike of 1928, that I should place before the Court briefly the causes that led up to this strike. On my return from the Cawnpore T.U.C. in November 1927, I naturally kept in touch with the Trade Union Leaders that I had met there and also took an interest in the Trade Unions. Besides the exhibits put in of my speeches in Bombay there are, P. 967, 958, 960, 944, 949, 657, 971, 972 etc.

The Textile Industry began a very prosperous period in the year 1916. Indian manufacturers found their markets expanding in Persia, Mesopotamia, East Africa, etc.; about the same time the import of piece-goods fell by about 50 per cent, leaving a big margin of the home market to be supplied. The post-war boom in the cotton industry lasted much longer than the boom in other industries in India, there was a genuinely increased demand for cloth. Further, cloth prices mounted up with the prices of other goods. And we find the annual average prices of cotton manufacture for the three years 1918 to 1920 were three times as much as the prices of 1914. In spite of this state of industry we find that the wages of the workers lagged behind seriously, of course we do not expect any more from Capitalism. It was not until 1920 that any increase was obtained by the workers.

Another point of fact is that the Cotton Industry enjoyed abounding prosperity during the years 1919 to 1921, the level of profits was extraordinarily high during these years as follows:— 99.69 per cent on capital invested in 1919, 102.68 per cent on capital invested in 1920, and 92.73 per cent on capital invested in 1921. And this profit it must be remembered was being made on inflated capital.

During the year 1920 several strikes took place in the textile Industry, Bombay, Madras and elsewhere on the question of hours and wages. In 1921 there occurred 148 disputes in the Cotton Industry in India (I.D. in I' p. 31) involving 162, 203 workers. At this time there was practically no organisation among the textile workers. The two most prominent perhaps were the Madras Labour Union, and the Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad under the control of M. K. Gandhi. In 1922 the position remained about the same, there were 135 disputes between the textile workers and the employers involving 168,005 workers, (I.D. in I. p. 32) one of which took place in Bombay involving 60,000 workers.

### **Workers face attack**

From this time the position began to change, the reaction of the boom period was being felt by the employers and an organised attack was being prepared by them on the conditions of the workers. During the year 99 disputes took place, involving 111,447 workers (I.D. in I. p. 33) these disputes were on a larger scale than before and were of a different character than the strikes of the preceding years. The early strikes were to attempt to improve the conditions of the workers, increase wages and decrease hours. The strikes of 1923 were the beginning of an attack by the employers on conditions, and the strikes in the main were defensive.

The most important strike that took place during the year was caused by the Ahmedabad Mill-Owners' Association attempting to reduce the wages of the workers by 20 per cent from the 1st of April. The workers of the 56 mills in Ahmedabad went on strike against this reduction, 43,000 workers were involved. The strike

ended on the 4th June after two months on the leaders agreeing to a reduction of the wages of the workers to the extent of 15.625 per cent. The workers at Ahmedabad are under the influence of the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Union, which is in turn influenced by M. K. Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel and of course, many of the mill-owners of Ahmedabad who are supporters of the I.N. Congress.

The year 1924 was marked out for one of the most important and determined struggles of the Textile workers of Bombay. The number of disputes that took place in the Cotton Industry of India during this year were 55, involving 200,347 workers (I.D. in I. p 34). The most important of these was in Bombay and this was an attempt to resist the encroachments of the mill-owners on the already bad conditions. The trouble arose over the Bombay Mill-Owners' Association deciding to with-hold the annual bonus of the workers, owing as they said to trade depression. This annual bonus had been paid to the workers for the last five years and they had come to regard it as part of their wages, it should also be noted that there had not been any reduction in the cost of living

This decision of the mill-owners resulted in a General Strike of the mill-workers of Bombay City. The strike began on the 17th January and affected all the mills, involving over 160,000 workers, and accounting for the loss of 7¼ million working days (I D. in I. p. 7). The Local Government thought it of sufficient importance to interfere and they appointed a Committee of Enquiry which had terms of reference to report whether the workers had any customary, legal or equitable claim to the bonus which was capable of enforcement, and whether, as contended by the mill-owners, the grant of the bonus was not justified by the profits of the preceding year over the industry as a whole. A Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court and two "independent" persons made the Committee, and they reported on the 11th March, unanimously in favour of the mill-owners on both the questions. Of course, nobody expected any other verdict from these representatives of the employers.

This strike was one of the biggest and most determined defensive fights that the workers had put up, so far, against a reduction of their wages. In spite of bad organisation the workers showed a splendid sense of class-consciousness and class-solidarity. Nevertheless the strike collapsed on the 25th March, the workers resuming work on the employers' terms. During this year another textile strike took place at Cawnpore; this also ended in defeat for the workers.

### **Textile Employers Attack Again**

Encouraged by their success in 1924, the mill-owners of Bombay decided to make another attack in 1925. The number of disputes in the Textile Industry of India during this year was 68, involving 173,339 workers and a loss of over 11 million days (I.D in I. p. 35). It will be seen by these that the number of disputes decreases, but those disputes that did take place are on a larger scale than ever.

The most important strike during the year was that of the Bombay Textile workers and it was this dispute that led up to the General Strike of those workers in 1928.

### **Was the attack on the Workers justified?**

The Cotton Industry of India had reached a period of severe depression and the mill-owners true to their class looked to the workers to relieve the burden of expenditure, and reduce the cost of production. In spite of the fact that at this time the industry was ridiculously over-capitalised, a legacy from the boom and war period, nevertheless the Mill-Owners' Association of Bombay decided to reduce the wages, through the dearness of food allowance, by 20 per cent, of the textile workers. This reduction was to take effect from the 1st September 1925. This decision of the mill-owners meant a direct reduction of 11½ per cent in the wages of the workers.

We seem to hear in this announcement of the Bombay Mill-owners an echo of that astounding statement, made inadvertently, by the then Prime Minister Mr. Baldwin, during the same year.

"The wages of all workers must come down." This from the mouthpiece of Capitalism expressed admirably the intention of the capitalists, and what they were determined to do in their attempt to stabilise Capitalism, not only in Great Britain but in India and elsewhere.

### **The Position of the Industry**

It will be of interest to note that the Cotton Industry of India was carrying a capital of Rs. 26,23,25,598 in the year 1918-19, and the year 1925-26 it carried a capital of Rs. 46,43,22,971. (Paid-up and Debenture) (from the Statistical Abstract 1928). This capital is for British India only. This shows that the industry was carrying twice as much capital in 1925-26 than it had in 1918-19. The total number of workers employed in Mills in British India in 1918-19 was 267,669, and in 1925-26 there were 330,225 (Statistical Abstract). The increase of the number of workers is not shown to be very much. So while the total capital had increased by double, the number of workers to produce profit on that capital remained almost the same.

I shall now deal here with the unscrupulous manipulation of the mill-owner brigands. I have dealt with the conditions that led up to the position of the Textile Industry in 1925 and the unsatisfactory condition that the industry was in. But in this connection I might add that the position was further aggravated by the continuously rising exchange, during 1920 it was then 2/- to the Rupee, this phenomenon stimulated imports. New companies and agencies were floated, and much speculative placing of orders took place, especially from Great Britain for machinery, mill apparatus, etc. Very large orders were placed abroad for piece-goods, and with the expectation of a favourable exchange these began to arrive in large quantities during this year. However, the position changed, many of these mush-room agencies and companies failed, leaving an unsatisfactory state of affairs to be cleared up by the industry.

Among the reasons that rendered the situation of the Bombay Cotton Industry worse than that of other centres was the reckless methods used to exploit the industry during the boom period, this was done especially by the method of over-capitalisation. While in other centres there was over-capitalisation, it was done in a different manner, and used for the extensions of plant and new erections at inflated prices, while in Bombay this was a manipulation of the managing agencies, and of direct inflation of capital.

A classical example of this manipulation was the sale of the Sassoon Group of Mills, whose book value was computed at Rs. 2.75 crores, to a syndicate formed for the purpose at 6 crores. (Report of the Bombay Stock Exchange Committee of 1924.)

The result of this manipulation was that the same number of workers in these Mills, working with the same number of Spindles and the same number of Looms, had to get on with the task of producing profit on Rs. 6 crores instead of on Rs. 2.75 crores. Nevertheless in spite of this history of brigandry the Bombay Mill-owners had the hard-neck to ask from the Government protection for the industry, and the result of this was the establishment of the Special Tariff Board (Cotton Textile Industry Enquiry) by the Government of India and the suspension of the Cotton Excise Duty in December 1925. The Cotton Excise Duty was subsequently abolished.

### WORKERS STAVE OFF ATTACK FOR THE TIME BEING

In the meantime, however, the workers had been on strike against the proposed reduction of 11½ per cent in their wages. It was the most serious strike that the Textile Industry had so far faced, involving over 160,000 workers and resulting in the loss of over 11 million working days (I.D. in I. p. 8). This struggle cost the workers almost as much as the struggle of the last year.



Nevertheless the workers on this occasion again put up a stubborn resistance against the attack upon their wages and in spite of the inadequate organisation they showed that they understood the need for concerted action on their part. Very little or no assistance was given them by the new reformist union, the Bombay Textile Labour Union.

From the Report of the Communist Party of Great Britain for 1926 we find that the C.P.G.B. took the lead in the campaign of support for the Indian Textile Strike in Bombay 1925, and succeeded in securing the opening of a lock-out fund by the General Council of the British T.U.C., the first of its kind in the history of the British Labour Movement to support the Indian working-class-struggle. This realised £ 1,250.

The employers maintained their position until the Government announced the decision to suspend the Cotton Excise Duty, this was a concession to the employers. They then decided not to enforce the 11½ per cent cut, and after a long and bitter struggle the workers resumed work having for the time being staved off the attack.

The suspension of the Cotton Excise Duty gave the same benefit to the mill-owners of Ahmedabad as it did to the mill-owners of Bombay City. In view of this and in view of the victory of the Bombay workers, the workers of Ahmedabad should have made an attempt to recover that which had been taken away from them in 1923. However, no effort was made or has since been made to recover the 15 per cent. M. K. Gandhi through the Ahmedabad Textile Labour were not prepared to lead the workers on this issue. The sooner the workers are liberated from this treacherous influence the better.

### STRIKE OF THE MADRAS TEXTILE WORKERS

During this year there were other attacks made upon another section of the Indian Textile workers this was in the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills, Madras. Here 800 workers struck work against a proposed reduction of 20 per cent of their piece

work rates Arbitration was forced upon them and the local Collector acted as Arbitrator The result was that the workers were forced to accept a 15 per cent reduction for Weavers working two looms and a 12½ per cent for Weavers working single loom The Madras Labour Union has done nothing in this matter to alter the position

### THE COTTON EXCISE DUTY AND THE SPECIAL TARIFF BOARD

The Cotton Excise Duty was imposed in the early stages of the Indian Industry, following an agitation and at the dictation of the Lancashire Cotton capitalists, to stifle competition in India This duty has been a burden on the industry for many years and is an excellent example of foreign domination For years an agitation has been carried on for its removal, however it was not until after the Bombay Mill-owners Association had carried on a vigorous campaign, and then the Bombay strike of 1925, that the duty was removed

This was followed by a demand for an enquiry into the conditions of the industry, which resulted in the Government accepting the proposal for an enquiry and on the 10th June, 1926 a Special Tariff Board was appointed The report of this Tariff Board was published on the 7th June 1928, it was much delayed Nevertheless, this delay did not prevent the Bombay mill-owners from acting on the recommendations (at least those that referred to the workers) They knew them and it was this report that provided the mill-owners with the excuse to launch another and more determined attack upon the textile worker in 1928

### TEXTILE WORKERS DURING 1926

There was a distinct lull in the struggle of the textile workers during 1926 The I.D. in I p. 36 only reports 57 disputes involving 22,713 workers This was really the lull before the storm During the whole of this period no real effective Trade Union had as yet established itself, in Bombay we had the Ginni

Kamgar Mahamandal, and the Bombay Textile Labour Union which was under the influence of the reformist leaders R. R. Bakhale and N. M. Joshi. The report of the Bombay Textile Labour Union is instructive for the year 1926 and shows what a reformist union can do. The report says that during the year 1926 it received 260 complaints from the workers about their conditions out of these complaints 89 only became successful—successful in the eyes of the B.T.L.U. During the period under report the union is proud of the fact that it did not authorise any strike. However, in spite of this the Union has to report that they dealt with five strikes in four mills. One was a reduction of wages which the Khatav Mill imposed upon the Weavers in April and maintained, the Union accepted the position. At the same Mill the management imposed a cut in the wages of the Spinners. True to their idea of Trade Unionism Bakhale and Co. dealt with it, and on an assurance of the employers that they would look into the grievances and a promise to stop further unemployment (nothing about the wage reduction), the Union says that it persuaded the Spinners to resume work. Another case, 15 workers struck at the Swadeshi Mill, Bombay, the Union officials went along and found that they had no real complaint! (T.U.C. Bulletin for June 1927, D. 390)

This is the record of the Union to which R. R. Bakhale is the Secretary, another candidate for the I.L.O. Here again was complete bankruptcy shown, no contact with the worker, and no attempt to defend the already bad conditions of the workers, or no attempt to prepare the workers for the general attack that was being prepared by mill-owners.

### THE ATTACK OF THE MILL-OWNERS

The number of disputes that took place during 1927, as reported in the I.D. in I. p. 37, Cotton Mills was 60. In the main these were minor disputes, the most important of which were caused by the resentment of the workers in the Bombay mills to the attempts of the mill-owners to introduce their Rational System, and this was what led up to the General Strike of 1928.

Very little advance was made in organisation among the textile workers during the year 1927.

"Industrial Disputes in India" (p. 38) shows 1928 to be the most important year for the textile workers, there were 110 disputes in all involving 323,484 workers and causing a loss of 24,851,274 working days.

Since the year 1925 after the attempt to reduce the wages of the workers by 11½ per cent had failed, the Bombay mill-owners carried on large scale retrenchment in this way creating the necessary army of unemployed to use in their attack that was coming. In 1926 the employers after putting their heads together decided that what they wanted was more output, more efficiency and of course more profit. How were they to get this?

The biggest item of costs always is the wages of the worker, and therefore the mill-owners looked to the workers to see how they could reduce costs. They came to the conclusion that they must introduce "Rationalisation", this they called "Fordising". But it was not until 1927 that the mill-owners were ready to make their experiment and it was then that rationalisation was resorted to in an organised manner.

It is necessary for us to go back to the year 1927 because as I have pointed out earlier it is not possible to show a line of demarcation between one strike and another, strikes are all inter-connected and are all a part of the class-struggle. Therefore, in dealing with the 1928 mill strike, it is necessary for us to refer to earlier stages to show how the struggle developed.

### THE INTRODUCTION OF THE "NEW SYSTEM" (RATIONALISATION)

The first attempt at rationalisation was made by Sassoon in his group, using the Manchester Mill in January 1927. This was a mill that had been fitted out and reopened by Sassoon specially to make this experiment. And in this mill the rational system was applied to the Spinning Department. However, we have some earlier examples of the attempt to introduce the "New System" in other mills belonging to the Sassoon group as early as September

1926. In the Blow room of the David Mill rationalisation was introduced, we then find that Sassoon began applying it to certain Departments of nearly all his mills. The introduction of rationalisation at the Apollo Mill, another of the Sassoon group, led to a strike on August 1st 1927. Here it was introduced in the Weaving Department. This was followed by a strike in the Manchester Mill for the same reason, on 5th August. After this strike lasting for a month the workers had to resume work in both the mills and the new system was continued.

The rationalisation scheme was briefly as follows, to get the Spinner who was up to then working only one side to work two sides, and the Weavers who had only been working two looms up to this time, to work on three looms, of course this does not go into detail of the different Departments. In the first place the new scheme was introduced on an optional basis, and then made compulsory the workers who would not work it being sacked. The workers claimed that they could not work the new scheme, they also found that there was no equivalent increase in the wages, all this naturally resulted in strikes. After these strikes, on the men resuming work, the management began to victimise those workers who had taken a prominent part in the strikes. On removing them the employers thought that it would be easier to introduce the new scheme. All this was so far experimental on the part of Sassoon's for the Mill-Owners' Association.

The year 1928 opened with the offensive of the Bombay Mill-owners on January 2nd, this was the main attempt of the employers to force their scheme of rationalisation. Here again Sassoon led the attack, introducing the new scheme in nearly all his mills. On January 2nd, the workers struck work and in a very short space of time the whole Sassoon group was involved, over 12,000 workers being on strike. At the same time an attempt was made in the Spring Mill of N. M. Wadia and Co. to introduce the new system in both the Spinning and Weaving Departments, this resulted in 4,200 workers going on strike. (Report of the B.S.E.C. 1928-29 p. 5.) I was in Bombay at this time and taking a keen interest in the development of this struggle of the mill-workers.

It is interesting to note that Sassoon's should be the company to lead the attack, as Sassoon, it will be remembered, was the firm most prominent during the boom period to manipulate their capital and inflate it out of all proportion. The cry of the Bombay Mill-owners' Association was that they could not meet the competition from Japan, England, and China.

It was quite obvious that Sassoon's were acting as the spear-head for a concerted attack planned by the Bombay Mill-owners' Association on the conditions of the workers to reduce costs. And to justify their attack they said that they were only carrying out *one* of the recommendations of the Special (Cotton) Tariff Board. That was the need for the introduction of more efficient methods of work in the Mills, in other words rationalisation. It is rather strange, though, that Sassoon started introducing new system in 1926 and the Special Tariff Board was also appointed in 1926. So on the face of it, the excuse made by the mill-owners was definitely false. Because I have shown that Sassoon was attempting to introduce to the new scheme even before the Cotton Tariff Board began its work, and the Bombay Mill-owners' Association had decided to introduce rationalisation even before this.

The intention of the mill-owners was to gradually increase the number of spindles looked after by one Spinner, and the number of looms looked after by each Weaver at the same time introducing new piece-work rates. The introduction of the new piece-work rates meant a direct cut in the wages of the workers as I will show later.

Of course the employers dare not introduce these drastic changes in all mills in Bombay simultaneously, the reason is quite obvious, they feared a General Strike of the workers. So our 'friend' Sassoon, the leading brigand, was to make the experiment and see how the workers would take it, also at the same time to divide the workers and force the scheme on them mill by mill.

## THE REFORMIST TEXTILE UNION AT WORK

Encouraged by the failure of the mill workers to resist the new scheme of rationalisation in the Sassoon mills, as in the case of the

strike of the workers in these mills which started on 2nd January the workers were forced back to work on 25th February, the strike ending in favour of the employers:—other mill-owners started the attack on the workers in their particular mills, the workers in these individual mills began to resent this and several strikes were started. The attack differed in different mills, some introduced rationalisation, some new wage rates, others making the workers clean machines during their own time, the introduction of the ticket system and so on.

Here I will give a brief outline containing the general attack leading up to the general strike of 1928. Following the Manchester and Apollo Mills 1927 and the whole Sassoon group 1928, the Wadia group introduced rationalisation in their Spring Mill in January, the workers struck work but resumed again on a compromise worked out by the Bombay Textile Labour Union, no attempt was made to link up the struggle. Again on the 31st January the employers of the same mill reduced the rates of wages of the workers, the workers struck work again and were forced to resume work of February 7th defeated.

The employers of the Kohinoor Mill increased the working hours of their workers, the men struck from 2nd February to the 8th February. The Madhowji Dharamsi Mill reduced the rates of the wages of the workers, they struck work from the 20th February to 5th March. The Textile Mill withdrew the grants for railway passes, the workers struck from 21st February to 25th February. The Rachel Sassoon Mill increased the working hours, a one-day strike took place here. The Pearl Mill and the Morarji Gokuldas Mill reduced the rates of wages, a strike took place here between 12th and 20th March. The Textile Mill stopped the system of "Badlis", the workers struck work from 17th March to the 3rd April. The Simplex Mill reduced rates of wages and the workers struck work on the 26th March until 11th April. All this happened between the 1st January and April, and in each case the workers struck work for different periods and also in each case they were forced back to work defeated, assisted by the B.T.L.U. (Joshi, Bakhale and Co ).

In the face of this general attack the Bombay Textile Labour Union stepped in to play its historical role, betrayal, and did vigorous propaganda to prevent the other mill workers coming to the rescue of those who were being attacked, thereby doing exactly what the mill-owner wanted, that was to prevent a General Strike while they introduced their new scheme (rationalisation).

The immediate effect of the new scheme of the employers would be to double the work and the output while only increasing the wages by considerably less than 50 per cent, (that is of course if the workers could operate the Scheme), and at the same time creating a large army of unemployed workers.

### WORKERS TAKE THE OFFENSIVE

As against the policy of Messrs Joshi, Bakhale and Ginwalla and the Textile Labour Union who were doing their best to keep the workers at work by leaflets etc.: the Left-wing and Workers' and Peasants' Party trade union leaders who understood the manoeuvre of the mill-owners, called upon the workers to make a stand against this attack. Torn between this conflicting advice the workers who were on strike resumed work again, in some cases after 1½ months' struggle. Dissatisfaction continued and when the workers received their wages at the end of March they then saw what drastic cuts had been made in the rates, the full effect of these cuts was then realised.

In the Kastoorchand Mill, one of the Currimbhoy group, a direct cut was introduced in the rates of the wages of the weavers and these workers struck work on 3rd of April. It was about this time that I addressed my first meeting of the Bombay Textile workers in relation to their conditions. In the Findley group of Mills the employers also attempted to introduce the rationalisation scheme, the result was that disaffection spread from mill to mill. Textile and Kastoorchand Mills were on strike at the beginning of April and these workers merged themselves into the General Strike. The workers in all other mills began to understand the tactics of the employers and to realise that the attack was



general This understanding was certainly assisted by leaflets and meetings held by the Workers' and Peasants' Party and Left-wing trade union leaders From this time onwards I made it my business to go to the mill area almost everyday

On the 16th of April the whole of the workers in the Currimbhoy group of mills struck work, and strange enough the leaders of the Textile Labour Union (Messrs Ginwalla, Parulekar and Syed Monawwar) on the 18th of April attended Delisle Road to see the workers and hear their grievances The Textile Labour Union apparently did not know what the mill-owners were doing At the same time a meeting of the strikers which I attended was being held at Nagu Sayaji's Wadi At this meeting a Strike Committee was elected

A demonstration of workers was then taken from Nagu Sayaji's Wadi numbering about 15,000 and they confronted Ginewalla and Co at Delisle Road, Cement Chawl, with the intention of informing the leaders of the Textile Labour Union of the trouble that existed among them A huge meeting was held at which I was one of the speakers and the workers at this meeting declared a General Strike At this meeting another Strike Committee was elected which included the names of the above gentlemen, along with the workers and the Left-wing leaders

When these three officials of the B T L U returned to their headquarters at Sandhurst Road and reported what had happened to their leader, Mr N M Joshi, they were taken to task Mr N M Joshi was against the calling of the General Strike, quite naturally, and he was not concerned about the wishes of the workers, the Strike Committee which had been elected by the workers in the morning could not be endorsed by him Further a statement was issued over the names of Joshi, Ginwalla and Bakhale opposing the idea of a General Strike, in this way they still did their best to betray the workers To attempt to further sabotage the strike they appointed a Committee of their own

## THE GENERAL STRIKE

It was claimed by the Bombay Mill-owners' Association and others interested in misrepresenting the situation that, the strike

was commenced without any warning, but it will be seen by what has already been said that there is no foundation in this claim at all. It was further claimed from certain quarters that no demands were put forward by the workers before going on strike, however, sufficient has already been said here about the conditions of workers and I have also shown what was the intention of the employers. And this is supported by the Committee set up to enquire into the strike (B.S.E.C. Report page 2). "Had it been otherwise, it would not have been possible for a handful of men to keep so many workers on strike for a period amounting very nearly to six months."

The fact is that certain Trade Union Leaders and workers who understood the intentions of the mill-owners, and were not prepared to stand by and see the workers crushed mill by mill, and made to submit to the rationalisation scheme and wage cuts of the employers carried on a strenuous campaign of propaganda in favour of a General Strike. Was not the General Strike the very thing the mill-owners wanted to avoid? Was not their attack so arranged to take mill by mill and so impose their scheme? This being so we were not prepared to stand by and watch the workers being beaten, we were not prepared to play the game of the employers.

A General Strike was the only effective reply to the mill-owners' attack. The only logical way to meet this attack that threatened the already bad conditions, to prevent further defeats of the workers, was to respond with the whole force of the workers, and in support of this, mass meetings of the workers were held all of which I tried to attend. The response of the workers to this lead was magnificent, they realised in spite of the reformist leaders who tried to keep them at work, that it was their conditions that were being attacked and the only way to resist this attack was to fight, and fight they did. (D 404 T)

Mr. D. R. Mayekar, the Secretary of the Girmā Kamgar Mahamandal who had now become an agent of the mill-owners was carrying on propaganda, as D 403 T will show, against the strike.

The number of mills that closed down began to increase steadily from the 16th of April, and on the morning of the 23rd of

April some workers were leaving their mills and going to the homes they had come from the Gold Mohar mill, when they reached Sewri, a place about half a mile from any mill they were met by a posse of police. The police attempted to disperse them, in doing so they started trouble and followed this up by opening fire on the mill-workers. As a result of this one worker Parasram Jadao was shot dead off the spot and another seriously wounded (P 1035 and P.W. 245). I arrived on the spot shortly after this incident and saw the dead body of the worker. A large crowd of strikers who were standing around were naturally in a very agitated state. In defence of this murder, the police officer who gave the order to fire claimed that the workers were going to attack the New City Mill, but this mill was at least a mile away from where the workers were attacked by the police and from this position not a mill could be seen.

On the 26th of April every cotton mill in the city of Bombay was closed down with the exception of one at Colaba. The General Strike was complete and over 150,000 workers were on strike and these workers stood solid for over six months.

### THE JOINT STRIKE COMMITTEE

The Left-wing trade union leaders and Workers' and Peasants' Party, had given the lead, it was the correct lead and the workers realised it. In the earlier stages a Strike Committee was elected from the workers and included in this were the Left wing leaders and the members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and this Committee carried on the strike. At the beginning of the strike three demonstrations of the mill-workers were organised and attempts were made by the police to prevent them. On the 19th of April one was organised from Nagu Sayaji's Wadi and on approaching the Koh-i-Noor Mill, Dadar, for no reason at all the police dispersed it by indiscriminate battoning (P.W. 245). Throughout the strike the police harassed the workers in an organised manner, even entering the workers chawls and beating them and in this way attempting to intimidate them.

During this time much trouble was created by the B.T.L.U. which as I have said was against the strike and trying to break it;

even press statements were issued by them condemning it. On the 28th of April two deputations were taken to the Governor of Bombay, one was led by Mr. N. M. Joshi and the other by D. R. Mayekar. Both claimed to speak on behalf of the textile workers in reality the position was that neither of them represented the workers nor were they given any mandate to approach the Governor. but this is the usual way that these persons imposed themselves upon the workers.

On April the 29th at a meeting held in Nagu Sayaji's Wadi the workers were called upon to form a Volunteer Corps and to be disciplined, a programme of demands was also submitted at this meeting by the Strike Committee (D 405 T), which later formed the basis of the seventeen demands of the Joint Strike Committee. The workers were told at this meeting that they had got to face a stiff fight and that their job was ultimately to bring into being a workers Raj, like the one that exists in Russia today. The spirit of the workers was splendid and they were not slow in coming forward as volunteers.

At this stage it was considered necessary to bring about unity between the workers under the influence of the B.T.L.U. and the Strike Committee formed of members of the Girmi Kamgar Mahamandal and Left-wing trade unionists, further it was necessary to draw the workers connected with the B.T.L.U. actively into the struggle. In this matter we were not concerned about persons like Joshi or Bakhale, but what we were concerned about was drawing the few workers that they had away from their influence. To put this into effect a Joint Strike Committee was formed consisting of 30 members, 15 elected from the Strike Committee already working and 15 from the B.T.L.U. Those from the B.T.L.U. included N. M. Joshi, Syed Munawwar, Ginnwala and Parulekar. Although these individuals were there, they did not influence the workers, the reason for this being that on so many previous occasions they had betrayed the cause of the workers. The Joint Strike Committee was established on May the 2nd and on May the 3rd the demands of the workers were again formulated and those which had already been put forward were incorporated in what became known as the 17 demands, and are shown in the

Fawcett Committee Report (pp. 175-177), the reply of the mill-owners to these demands is, also included on these pages.

The Joint Strike Committee elected Joint Secretaries, these were R. S. Nimbkar and Syed Munawwar, and Joint Treasurers, these were Mr. Parulekar and myself. Several leaflets and communique were issued in the name of the Joint Strike Committee, many of which have been put in as defence exhibits. One such communique was issued on the 6th of May, which showed the attitude of the mill-owners to the workers, and their refusal to treat with the Joint Strike Committee. To avoid dealing with the workers they put forward the pious plea, after asking what the personnel of the J.S.C. was, that they were only prepared to meet representatives of the registered Trade Union. They only wanted to meet some of their old friends again who would see "reason". The Joint Strike Committee represented the workers and was too militant for them.

### **Girni Kamgar (Red Flag) Union started**

In the meantime the union that had started the idea of the General Strike got involved in some trouble. The Secretary of the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal, D. R. Mayekar, had misappropriated funds of the Union, and in consequence of this had been expelled from the Union. It seems that he must have got in touch with the police and the Bombay Mill-owners' Association, and received their advice. He first came out with propaganda against the strike. The owners also apparently advised him to register the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal under the Trade Unions Act; which up to then had not been registered. He therefore registered the Union in his name, although at the time he had no legal connection with it, and although he had no support and did not represent the Union. He was given every assistance and protection by the Registrar of Trade Unions, and the Union was registered in his name. This is an open case of where the authorities have assisted an individual who had misappropriated money from a body to register that body under his name without making any inquiry if he really represented that organisation. The authorities thought by doing this they would cause confusion among the mill-workers. A

handbill was issued by the Workers' and Peasants' Party warning the workers against Mayekar and informing them that Mayekar had misappropriated the funds of the Union. This handbill is dated January 28th (P. 1016).

Another warning leaflet was issued over the signatures of the Managing Committee of the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal. Further P. 1463 was issued making it clear to the public that Mr. D. R. Mayekar had no connection with the G.K.M. In spite of all this the Registrar registered the Union in his name. However I am glad to say that the workers were not misled in this matter and were not confused.

A meeting of the workers and members of the G.K.M. was held on the 22nd of May 1928 in Nagu Sayaji's Wadi and at this meeting it was decided to establish the Girni Kamgar Union. The premises of the old Union were taken over. I attended this meeting with others of the accused and was elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the new Union (P. 958 T). On May the 23rd the G.K.U. was registered under the Trade Union Act and officially began work, and became known to the workers as the 'Red Flag Union'.

### **Activities of the G.K.U.**

Meetings were held of the workers at least once or twice a day throughout the strike. The strike was taken up with unprecedented enthusiasm, numerous workers coming forward as volunteers and pickets, the main activities of the strike were carried on by the G.K.U. During the period that the strike lasted the Joint Strike Committee of which the G.K.U. was most important part, organised assistance and relief for the strikers. Street collections were made and funds raised from other working-class organisations in India and abroad. The total amount received by the Joint Strike Committee was as follows:—

Total amount received from all sources: Rs. 1,11,527-0-11  
This included among other amounts Rs. 34,496-12-9 from the U.S.S.R., Trade Union Movement; Rs. 25,405-5-8 from the International Federation of Textile Workers' Association Rs. 4,668-8-0 from the Workers' Welfare League of India. London etc. etc:—

On the 12th of May the Mill-owners' Association issued a statement in reply to the seventeen demands put forward by the Joint Strike Committee, and on the 17th of May they published a further statement to the effect that they would only reopen the mills and re-admit the workers to work on the following terms, this of course turned the strike into a lock-out.

The terms were as follows:—

- (1) Standardised rates of wages;
- (2) Revised and standardised muster-rolls,
- (3) Full ten hours for all male operatives in all departments, without extra remuneration to those who had been doing work for less time previously;
- (4) Standardised rules and regulations for enforcing discipline;
- (5) Uniform system of calculating wages; and
- (6) Fines to be credited to a welfare fund and unclaimed wages to be made available at any time on sufficient identification.

The above statement made the position of the mill-owners quite clear, they now wanted to take the opportunity to standardise their rationalisation scheme with the reduced wage rates for all their mills in Bombay, and to do this the employers had turned the strike into a lock-out. But we are charged, and this is the Prosecution case,—with prolonging the strike; it is quite clear from the above that the Party to blame here is none other than the mill-owners themselves. However at a later stage attempts were made by the mill-owners to open the mills on these terms but the workers refused to resume work.

### **Workers resumed work**

Several attempts were made by interested persons to try and end the strike, but it was not until October the 4th that representatives of the Joint Strike Committee met the representatives of the mill-owners, and at this meeting it was agreed that work should be resumed on the following terms:—

- (1) That a Committee of three members be appointed by the Government of Bombay, with terms of reference to cover the

question of the 17 demands of the workers, the standardisation scheme of the owners and their standing orders.

(2) Work to be resumed on the basis that for the period between the calling off the strike and the publication of the report of the Committee of Enquiry, the rates and wages of March 1927 should be paid provided that in those mills of the Sassoon group, the Findley group and the Kohinoor Mill which now worked on the revised system, the rates and the wages of March 1928, shall be paid in the Spinning Department only, and in the following mills the rates of March 1928 be paid in the Weaving Department:—the Manchester, the Appollo and Mayer Sassoon Mills. The question of muster-rolls shall not arise. Certain scales of advance were given on the workers resuming work. Work to be resumed on Saturday, October the 6th of 1928. This was in brief, the terms of the resumption of work and how one of the biggest strikes that Bombay city had ever seen came to an end.

Two months earlier an attempt was made by N. M. Joshi and other leaders to get the workers to capitulate. The workers were informed that relief was running short, but they themselves replied at all the mass meetings that they were not on strike for relief, and that they would carry on the strike until they had won (C.I.D. and Police Reports show this.) They carried it on however until the above terms were arrived at which were certainly not in the interests of the workers. The Prosecution have said time and again that all we were concerned about was prolonging the strike, the workers themselves would be able to answer this allegation. They were, of course, not satisfied even with these terms of resumption and were prepared to carry on the strike even after October the 6th.

### **Work of the G.K.U. after the strike**

I have given the causes that led up to the strike, and a brief account of the strike and shown how again after one of the most determined fights on the part of the workers, showing splendid courage and class-solidarity, the workers were forced to resume work without gaining their point, rationalisation was to continue. But the struggle itself had not been a wasted effort, the morale of



the workers was as good at the end of the fight as it was at the beginning. The workers had learnt the need for militant organisation and they set about the task of building a militant Trade Union. Perhaps the most important point of all was that the workers had decided to throw over board the reactionary and reformist Trade Union leaders. After the strike Mr. N. M. Joshi and his friends could not hold a meeting in the mill area, the workers did not want to hear these individuals.

A practical programme was at once decided upon to build the G. K. Union, mill committees were started in all mills and the workers set about the task of building a fighting fund and developing a defence corps (P 967 T). P 929 T shows the attack that was carried on by the Police upon unarmed workers who were marching in procession on the 12th of December 1928 and was one of the reasons for calling for 5,000 drilled volunteers. The workers had learnt that the class-struggle was a bitter struggle in which all the forces of the superior organisation of the capitalists, coupled with the forces of the State, the Police and the Army, were arrayed against them. They had also learnt that this struggle could not be conducted in an office in Sandhurst Road or by negotiations with the Governor etc., but only by their own strength and by their own organisation led by themselves could they achieve success

Seven centres of the G.K.U. were at once opened in different positions throughout the Mill area in Bombay and the membership of the Union began to grow by leaps and bounds, by the end of 1928 its membership was at least 70,000. All this was achieved during 1928. At the beginning of the year they were not more than 5,000 organised mill-workers in Bombay in all the Textile Unions. P 792 T, meeting file shows the attempt of the mill-owners to crush the Union almost immediately after the General Strike. It also demolishes the claim of the Prosecution that the G.K.U. was not working to better the immediate conditions of the workers. The handbills etc. show my attendance at the numerous meetings of the workers of the different mills held to build the Union and to inaugurate the mill committees. The reason for this outstanding development in Trade Union Organisation

was the fact that the leaders of the G.K.U. put forward a militant policy, the fact that the workers were not satisfied with the terms on which they had been forced to resume work, the fact that the mill-owners were not respecting the terms on which the workers had resumed the works in spite of the fact that it was in their favour, and the fact that the mill-owners were still carrying on their attack even while the Enquiry Committee was sitting. In support of this we have a mass of evidence, D 411, 412, 432 to 434, 456, 470 etc. etc. and the Fawcett Committee's Report. These reasons should be sufficient. But on top of this the G.K.U. was preparing the workers for the attack of the employers that was to be launched when the Fawcett Committee gave its report, the result of this we saw in 1929.

The G.K.U. was the reply of workers to Messrs Joshi, Bakhale and others of the B.T.L.U. who were against the General Strike and who had tried to betray them, and who had told the workers that the strike weapon was useless. This fact is amply borne out by the report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India of which Mr. N.M. Joshi is one of the signatories, page 339, where it says, "The subsequent arrest of Leaders of the G.K.U. deprived the workers of these representatives, and the Leaders of the older Unions were unable to regain the confidence of the men." The Textile workers of Bombay were completely disillusioned, the reformist Leaders who advocated conciliation and arbitration were exposed, the workers were out to form a Union that would not wait for the employers to attack but would take up the offensive. Too long had the Textile workers waited to be attacked by the capitalists, the fight was now to be changed from defensive of their beastly conditions to the offensive for better. Because of this we saw the beginning of the largest Trade Union that had ever come into existence in India, a Union which was a militant and Left-wing one because it was born from the struggle of the workers. The roots of this organisation were in the

workers, the G.K.U. was not formed from above by come-over lawyers and politicians whose job used to be just to negotiate with the employers on behalf of the workers. This Union was not formed by individuals who were seeking a trip to Geneva at the expense of the workers or seats in the Councils. This Union, the G.K.U. was an expression of the growing revolutionary mass movement among the workers.

It was not something that had been hatched out overnight by a few revolutionary agitators, it was the result of the past struggle of the workers; the exposure of the self-seeking pseudo Trade Union Leaders who had foisted themselves upon the movement; and it was the sign of the preparation for the struggle that is to come. The Bombay textile workers through G.K.U. had given the lead to the workers of India to throw off the reformists, and organise on militant lines recognising the class-struggle.

To show that the struggle of the textile workers was not something peculiar to Bombay, I will just refer to some of the other centres. A dispute arose in the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Mills on the 21st of May 1928 leading ultimately to a lock-out involving 8,000 workers. It should be noted that many of the mills in Sholapur are owned by the same owners as the Bombay mills. This strike spread to other mills in Sholapur, but some representatives of the B.T.L.U. interfered and were successful in getting some of the workers to return to work. But the grievances of the workers were not redressed and at least 13,000 workers remained on strike. It was my good fortune to be able to investigate the conditions of the workers at Sholapur at this time and I was able to address the strikers there for a few days during August 1928.

The mill-owners were able to get the Government machinery to operate and many of the workers were arrested and imprisoned. In this strike new stunt was tried, civil suits for damages were filed against the strike Leaders and Injunctions prohibiting the holding of the meetings was granted (D. 390). The

result of the strike was, as in other places, owing to the fact that the action of these workers was not co-ordinated with the strikes in other places, and because of the advice of certain Leaders, the workers were forced to resume work without any satisfaction.

Strikes took place in many other centres in India, in the Lalimli Mills, Cawnpore a strike of workers took place involving some 1750. The reasons for the strike were that 800 workers were put on three months' compulsory leave. The strike ended unsuccessfully. Here we have an example of the employer treating the worker like a part of the machinery, to be put on or taken off at will. Starvation wages are paid while the workers are employed and it is impossible for any provision to be made by the worker while he is working for periods of unemployment. But of course this is no concern of the employer (D. 390 T.U.C. Bulletin).

The workers of the Choolai Mills at Madras struck work against the introduction of the double loom system on 16th August, on similar reasons for which the workers were on strike in Bombay. The Madras Labour Union under the influence of Shiva Rao came to the assistance of the employers and the strike was called off pending the report of some Committees of experts that had been set up by the employers. In this way the workers were betrayed. While the Bombay workers were fighting a life and death struggle on the same question, these individuals like Shiva Rao and Kirk were carrying on propaganda against them on behalf of the employers. When at this moment the workers all over India were offering a struggle against the attacks of Capitalism at the moment when the struggle ought to have been unified, these alleged representatives of Labour were sabotaging the fight.

Almost at every textile centre in India during 1928 some sort of strike took place. At Dacca in the Dakeshwari Cotton Mills a strike took place, here the strike lasted only a few days and the workers were got back to work with a promise that their grievances would be referred to a Committee of Inquiry, the

management promising to redress their grievances in the light of the recommendations of this Committee. Again at Ahmedabad the textile workers wanted to get their grievances redressed and to fight for better conditions this position was "amicably" sabotaged by the intervention of the Secretary of the Labour Union and Mr. M.K. Gandhi. At the same time representatives of the textile workers who were on strike in Bombay went to Ahmedabad to get assistance from their fellow workers there. But Mr. Gandhi even went to the extent of advising the Ahmedabad workers not to subscribe to the Relief Fund of the Bombay strikes. But in spite of this advice the workers of Ahmedabad did subscribe several thousand rupees from their wages by small contributions. But the more important assistance of the active participation of the Ahmedabad workers in the struggle was sabotaged by Mr. Gandhi and Co.

I have dealt with the struggle of the textile workers in India, elsewhere I have dealt with wages and conditions, but I will just emphasise here again by giving a comparison of the wages received by the textile workers in Great Britain and in India. A weaver working in Lancashire receives for a 48 hours' week the some of Rs. 94-0-0 per month, for the spinners Rs. 94-2-0 per month for the same number of hours. In Bombay for 60 hours' week the wages received are Rs. 49-9-11 per month for a weaver, and Rs. 27-9-11 per month for a spinner, approximately. This shows that the wages of the workers in India even for a 60 hours week are far below those of the British workers.

In dealing with industry in general there are many things that I could have touched on, for instance the parasitical system of Managing Agents and so on. To deal fully with all these things I have not the time here, nevertheless, it is a fact that the Indian textile worker is ruthlessly exploited. The strikes that I have described and the strikes that we have participated in and have led, were all fought to prevent the conditions of the Indian textile workers which are already nothing short of rotten from being worsened. The same terrible conditions of Labour are today being used as a lever to worsen the conditions of the workers in Great Britain. The Indian worker is today being used to bring down the

wages and lengthen the hours of the textile workers in Lancashire. It is for this reason that the workers in Great Britain send financial assistance, it is for this reason that we workers are prepared to come from England to assist our Indian comrades in their struggle, and it is for the same reason that the struggle of the workers is one against Imperialism, that assistance is sent from the Russian workers.

I have shown how the employers have attempted to force wage reductions and rationalisation upon the workers. The only rationalisation that the textile employers have in view is a rationalisation based on greater exploitation of the workers. By this I mean, labour costs are to be cut down and the workers' conditions are to be made more miserable in order to secure for the employers the maintenance of excessive capital charges and excessive profits.

It is by this that I justify our attitude during the textile strikes, our agitation among the workers for class consciousness and solidarity, our support to the General Strike policy, the attempt to bring the whole weight of the workers into the struggle at once. It is for the reason that we set about the task of building a militant Trade Union, the Girni Kamgar (Red Flag) Union, an organisation that was prepared to recognise the class-struggle, a fighting organisation, by this means alone can the workers stave off the attack of the employers and obtain for themselves proper conditions of labour.

### TRADE UNION MOVEMENT CONCLUSION

I have stated the case in relation to the working-class movement at some length, because one of the most important purpose which Imperialism has in mind in prosecuting us is the attack upon that movement. I want to emphasise the point that it is an attack upon the Indian Trade Union Movement. I do so because of the continued campaign of distortion and misrepresentation carried on by the Government. It has come to our notice that at least two memoranda dealing with this case have been issued from the India Office and distributed freely in

the House of Commons and elsewhere. One was issued some time last November and the latest one was issued on the 25th of June 1931 by Mr. Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India. Both these documents appear to be attempts on the part of Mr. Wedgwood Benn to apologise on behalf of the Labour Government for having to continue this trial.

This apologist for British Imperialism tells us in his latest memorandum that it is not a fact that the Meerut Case is directed against Indian Trade Unionists. He follows this up by telling us that unlike the workers of the west the workers of India are mainly illiterate and have to depend almost entirely upon persons other than workers like themselves to assist in the organisation of Trade Unions. ".....and it, is therefore, the duty of any Government or authority in India to see that persons are not using the workers for their own political ends."

What humbug, what hypocrisy! Who is going to believe this sudden outburst of paternal interest on the part of British Imperialism for the slaves in India that it has so long been robbing, even if it does come from the mouth of a Labour Secretary of State for India? He then goes on to describe the strike wave of 1928 and the Bombay Textile Strike, and by his own words shows that this case is an attack upon the Indian Trade Union Movement. I have no need to say anything further about this as I have fully dealt with this matter in the body of my statement, as also I have dealt with the part we Communists played in the Trade Union Movements. He praises N.M. Joshi, Giri, Chaman Lal, Shiva Rao, Bakhale & Co., we do not grudge them this praise, on the other hand we do not expect to receive the praise of the imperialist bureaucrats or the agents of Imperialism, if we got it we would not be worthy of the confidence of the workers.

He then in his memorandum, goes on to talk about the deplorable and wretched conditions of the workers in India. This matter also I have adequately dealt with in my statement. Of course, we do not expect to hear from him that these deplorable and wretched conditions should be altered. Our crime is that some of us are Communists and that we have been sincerely

working in the Indian Trade Union Movement to alter this terrible state of affairs. Mr Wedgwood Benn joins hands with the Bureaucracy and the Prosecution here to suppress us and drive us out of the Trade Union Movement but at the same time he has not got the face to advocate the same policy or a similar prosecution of Communist in the British Trade Union Movement

I do not know in what position the Secretary of State stands in respect of contempt of Court, but clearly this memorandum issued and broadcasted by the India Office is contempt of Court. As a matter of fact apart from the lying misrepresentation to justify the continuance of this trial he has taken the matter out of the hands of this Court and delivered a premature judgment of our guilt, thus saving the trouble of your Honour, it only remains now for you to pass the sentences. Of course, after all he is only the mouthpiece, the material that he has put across in his memorandum is supplied by the Intelligence Bureau at Simla with the help of the Prosecution. But nevertheless he is a willing mouthpiece and apologist of British Imperialism

D/- 15-7-31

In my concluding remarks here I would try to reply to the above allegation

The Prosecution began by selecting for arrest in this case principally those who were connected with the militant Trade Union Movement. Of the 31 accused only 5, according to the Prosecution, were not Trade Unionist. The time for the arrest was chosen just at the moment when further big struggles were imminent in the industries with which the accused were concerned. There can be no doubt that the case was decided upon largely at the instance of the cotton-bosses of Bombay and the jute-bosses of Bengal combined with the anxiety of the Government about its Railways.

The Prosecution then proceeded to bring forward against us evidence, a large portion of which consists of particulars about our Trade Union activities. At the same time they stated in Court and broadcasted throughout the country their theory of the nature of the 'legitimate' Labour Movement and the type of activity in which it should indulge, while accusing us of 'fomenting' and



'prolonging' strikes, of conducting 'fraction' work, 'wire-pulling' and 'capturing' and other sinister activities in connection with the Trade Union Movement. At the same time the Prosecution and the Labour Government have held up to the admiration of India the 'rational views' of the Reformists on the 'Labour question', and applauded the fight which the reformists conduct against the working-class revolutionary movement, and their lulling the workers into a sense of false security that the Whitley Commission which has recently been touring India will bring them better conditions, and their advocacy of Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration<sup>s</sup>

They have denied that they are attacking the Trade Union Movement. But their actions in this case constitute a complete disproof of this denial. This case is among other things, a direct attack upon the Indian Trade Union Movement, conducted with the object of restraining the militant activities of the organised workers, and forcing them to remain subject to their present economic conditions, and the system of political oppression which rules them.

In reply to this I have to point out the falsity of the Prosecution theory. I have shown that the 'genuine' Labour Movement which the Prosecution praise, is a false Labour Movement, led astray by the agents of the Bourgeoisie (the Reformists and the Second Internationalists), the really genuine Labour Movement is the militant movement which fights Capitalism consistently for the improvement of its position, and whose historical destiny it is to overthrow Capitalism, to destroy the colonial dominance of Imperialism, and to lead the struggle for socialism.

I have given facts (which are more than supported by the Whitley Commission Report) which show the appalling exploitation of the Indian workers, the ridiculously small wages (it takes an average Indian worker about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  years to earn the equivalent to a day's wage of the Senior Counsel for the Prosecution), the long hours, the insecurity of employment; the

persecution and maltreatment; the bad conditions of work, the insanitation and bad housing, the long-drawn-out series of attacks on even these conditions and wages (Textile, Jute, Railways etc etc). I have shown how the employers treat the workers not 'as parties to a contract', as their economists preach, but as slaves to be dictated to and exploited until they have become useless and die.

I have shown how the Imperialist State treats the workers, the backward and barbarous state of Labour Legislation, the up-to-date and efficient Anti-Labour Legislation; the lack of education, the spying and the persecution of the workers' Trade Union Movement; the lathis and bullets whenever the workers come out on strike. That our Policy was correct has been amply shown by events that have followed our arrests, the vicious attacks that have taken place upon the Textile, Jute, Railway and other workers.

I have followed the history of the Labour Movement briefly. Almost as soon as the industrial working-class is formed in India it begins to struggle for better conditions. Its efforts at first are naturally chaotic and feeble. But, the capitalists and the Government recognise their historical enemy, and at once begin on the one hand to suppress it, and on the other to corrupt it with reformism. I have shown by actual instances the function of the reformists in the Indian Labour Movement;—to keep the workers at work when they want to fight; to sabotage their fight, if it cannot be prevented, by keeping the workers divided and localising strikes; to take the lead in their protest against imperialist policy (e.g. the Trade Disputes Bill etc.) so that protest comes to nothing; to preach class-collaboration and the acceptance of the reactionary policy of Imperialism (the Simon Commission; the R.T.C.; and the I.L.O.), and to incite the workers against the revolution and the militant leaders, so that their suppression and arrest is made easier.

In spite however of the efforts of the Government, the employers, the Congress and the reformists, the workers' movement has gone on developing. Its organisations, in the first stages nothing more than strike committees, are now becoming permanent, stable Trade Unions, extending over large areas, and embracing an ever increasing proportion of the workers. From the vague, ill formulated demands of the early stages they have progressed to clear, systematic programmes. From merely local, sectional, solidarity they have grown to the consciousness of the unity of interest of the workers as a class nationally, and even internationally. The workers instead of following blindly the leaders from outside their class begin taking an increasingly active part in organisation, meetings, demonstration, picketing, etc. marking a step forward in the growth of the workers' movement as an independent force in India. And the most advanced sections of the workers are coming to realise that their aims cannot be confined to economic questions, but must become political also. They are acquiring the social and political revolutionary consciousness of the working-class.

So much progress has been made in a period, since the movement began, of less than 15 years. Though discouraged and suppressed in all ways by the employers and the Government, misled by the reformists; although without education, and almost completely cut off from the more advanced sections of the working-class of the world by the action of the Government, the Indian working-class has made this very notable progress in so short a time. This appears to me to be a complete confirmation of our theory as to the nature of the working-class movement and its place in history. The Indian working-class is within sight of the position which our theory marks out for it, the leadership of the mass revolutionary movement for the overthrow of Imperialism, and the leadership in the subsequent struggle for the organisation of a Socialist Society.

Our activities (speeches, Trade Union meetings, etc.) in connection with the movement have been in accordance with our theory. That is a sufficient defence for them. *The Prosecution*, speaking for the bourgeoisie, finds them objectionable (though it

has not ventured to condemn them as illegal). We have worked, not in the interests of the bourgeoisie, but in the interests of the workers, laying bare the mechanism of the capitalist system, the causes of the strikes, the workers' poverty and the methods which the workers must adopt to end such a system of exploitation.

We always and consistently advocated preparation for action. When we considered action not to be in the interests of the workers, we did not advocate it. When we did consider it in their interest, we did advocate it, without reference to what the employers thought. This is how we 'fomented' strikes. When the workers struck work, we did not advise surrender at the first opportunity, but fought for the continuance of the strike until the sacrifice and suffering of the workers involved in it brought some recompense in the shape of concessions. Unless the workers come out of the struggle with added knowledge much of their suffering is in vain. I have justified the right of the Indian workers to receive assistance, both financial and moral, from their fellow workers in Russia, Great Britain and elsewhere in their struggles.

This is how we have 'prolonged' strikes. When we found Trade Unions being misled by reformist strike-breaking leadership, we conducted propaganda in favour of our policy. This is 'wire-pulling' and 'capturing'. We advocated a militant policy of strikes rather than submission and servility. We advocated 'solidarity' and 'class-consciousness'. We are not ashamed of these activities. We are, on the contrary, proud that the workers approved of them; and that the employers found them so inconvenient that they had to 'pull wires' and get us arrested.

The position is the same today as it was before our arrest, the need is there for the workers to have their well-organised and centralised militant industrial Trade Unions, based upon the theory of the class-struggle. It is essential to organise the widest masses of the working-class, to defend the day-to-day interest of the workers and to maintain the general revolutionary struggle of the masses of India, this alone can be done by the Communist Party.

I maintain that all class-conscious workers must concentrate every effort on the creation of an independent revolutionary Trade Union Movement. For this it is essential to organise militant industrial Trade Unions based upon factory committees, with the leadership elected directly by the workers and consisting of the most advanced militant workers. It is most important that every effort should be made to expose and isolate the reformists of all shades, from the open agents of British Imperialism such as N. M. Joshi, Shiva Rao, Chaman Lal, S. C. Joshi etc. to the sham 'Left' national reformists such as Jamnadas Mehta, Bose, Ruikar and all other agents of the Indian bourgeoisie who form a reactionary block against the revolutionary Wing of the Trade Union Movement. It is also most important in my opinion that the principles of conciliation Boards and arbitration Courts must be vigorously opposed; the only means of winning 'concessions' from the exploiters is by resolute class-struggle, by strikes and mass revolutionary action. The T.U.C. must be transformed and built up into a militant centre of the All India Labour Movement on a class basis, able to prepare and lead the economic struggles of the workers.

The successes of the Indian revolutionary struggle is dependent on a strong well organised working-class, to lead the Indian masses in their struggle for independence and emancipation. Such an organisation must be linked up with the revolutionary International working-class movement, helping forward the world revolution, the fight against Imperialism, the common enemy of the workers, and the world victory of the working-class as a whole.

Q. With regard to your connection with the C.P. of India the evidence is P 1295, and P 1303. Have you anything to say about these?

A. I know nothing about these exhibits. Nevertheless as I was a member of the C.P.G.B. in India I worked with the members of the C.P.I., and this of course naturally follows being a member of the same organisation.

As regards to an explanation of my connection with the C.P.I. I agree with what Spratt has already said in reference to this matter.

Q. With regard to your connection with W.P.P.'s and A.I.W.P.P. there is the following evidence: W.P.P. of Bombay: P 1344, 1326, 1373 (2), 1348 (7), 1373 (1); W.P.P. of Bengal: P 644, 1616; W.P.P. of the Punjab: P 1339 (P 451), 2051C, 1626, 549 (18), 1641, 1642; A.I.W.P.P: P 468 (2), 668, 1763, 1764, 669, 638, P.Ws. 36, 90, and 254. Have you anything to say about these?

A. I have nothing to say about these exhibits but I worked with the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bombay and I attended the All India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference at Calcutta in Decembar 1928. I also agree with what Spratt has said in reference to this organisation.

Q. The following evidence may be said to relate to your associations and connections: P 502, 2114, 2081, 930 Kranti of 29.7.28 (photograph), 667, 459, 611, 639, 658, P.W. 193, 1029, 645, 662, 665, 670, 797, 1261, 1280, 526 (10), 873, 971, P.W. 182, P 643, 646, 647, 648, 649. Have you anything to say about this evidence?

A. In respect of my connection with Hutchinson I have to say that I met Hutchinson for the first time at one of the sittings of the Bombay Strike Enquiry Committee which was being held at the Secretariat, Bombay. I think it was some time during October 1928 I should explain here that the sittings of the Strike Enquiry Committee were public and possibly Hutchinson had read in one of the newspapers that these sittings were being held in public and he attended. During the lunch interval he came and spoke to me with some of the other Labour Leaders there and he told me that he was interested in Labour affairs and also that he was a journalist. I met him once or twice after this and he asked me if I could give him a brief outline of the recent strike. I think I gave him a copy of the brief history that I prepared. The visiting cards can be accounted for by the fact that we had very seldom met and there was no pre-arranged meeting.

P 1029: In respect of this exhibit I cannot say anything because I never knew of the existence of such things, either a circle or a book or anything else which may be connected with it.

I have replied I think to the question of those exhibits put to me which refer to Desai when I gave reply in regard to the European correspondence.

Q. If there are any exhibits or evidence which I have omitted or any other point on which you have to say anything in this statement you can say it now.

A. I have to make a few remarks as a reply to this question; these remarks that I shall make should not be taken in the nature of a complaint because I hold no illusions on the question of justice under Imperialism. I understand what capitalist class-justice is. What I have to say here therefore will be more in the nature of an exposure of the hypocrisy of this farce of a trial. I would say therefore that many of the things that have happened during the course of this trial have not come exactly as a surprise to me. I have explained what I considered were the reasons for our arrests during my reply to the question in relation to my Trade Union activities. Our arrests especially those which took place in Bombay and Calcutta, were carried out with an imposing military display. The idea I suppose was to put fear into the workers with whom we had been connected. I can only say that Capitalism does not appreciate the forces that it has got to deal with. However, we were brought to Meerut, and in Meerut Jail many of us were kept isolated from one another for a long period, no reason was given for this. I personally on several occasions asked to be allowed to see comrade Spratt, but this was refused for some time. Later it came to light that the person responsible for this method of dealing with us was none other than Mr. R. A. Horton, the complainant in this case. This person seemed to be the all-powerful authority in Meerut at that time on the "Red Menace".

So we were brought to Meerut, a place that I had never visited before in my life, to stand a charge under Section 121-A. The grounds for ever bringing us to Meerut to stand such a charge are non-existent or at the most extremely flimsy. The conference that

it is alleged by the Prosecution was held here has been magnified out of all proportion to its actual importance. The Majority of our activities, as the evidence shows, were carried out either at Bombay or Calcutta. The main reasons of course for the Prosecution selecting this out-of-the-way place are quite obvious. Their object was to inconvenience us as much as possible and thereby make their task much easier, to isolate us from the movement with which we were connected, and from our friends or relatives who may have assisted us, and to bring us under the most subservient and illiberal judiciary in the country. Even within the structure of bourgeois society there are degrees to which certain persons and departments are prepared to cringe at the behest of the powers that be. I mean that some are prepared to go much further to serve their masters.

Then there was the question of Jury, had we been tried in either of the two places where the majority of us were arrested and where the majority of our activities took place we would have had to be given a trial by Jury. A trial of this character under those circumstances would have been too much of an uncertainty for the Prosecution with the flimsy evidence that they have brought forward. Hence, another reason for the selection of Meerut by the Prosecution to launch this trial. Many other reasons could be given but I think this sufficient to support my contention.

At a very early stage we went through the formality of applying for a transfer to a Presidency town, Bombay or Calcutta, where our activities had taken place and where we would have been in a better position to obtain more facilities. But strange to say for putting into operation this ordinary legal right, for which there was overwhelming justification, (referring back to the memorandum from the India Office of the 25th of June 1931) we find Mr. Wedgwood Benn using it as an argument that we were prolonging the trial. It is a fact that only a few of us had ever seen Meerut before we were brought here under arrest. This application was naturally dismissed by the Allahabad High Court. While I am dealing with the allegation of our prolonging the trial I will just refer to this memorandum of Mr. Wedgwood Benn



again, "... and by various other means, including a brief hunger-strike, they obstructed the proceedings and caused delay." This lying allegation was also made in a previous memorandum and which was replied to by us, in respect of this I should like to say in the first place that after being brought to Meerut and lodged in Jail we were kept waiting by the Prosecution for nearly three solid months on the excuse that the Prosecution were preparing their case, i.e. from March the 20th to June the 12th when the Magistrate's Court began. On the question of our hunger-strike which in all lasted for four days, I should like to reiterate that we attended the Court on all days during this hunger-strike and were not responsible for the holding up of the Court as alleged by Mr. Wedgwood Benn. I would only say here that such despicable allegations, which were, according to Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the result of an 'official enquiry', are only an attempt on the part of Prosecution to cover up their own incompetence.

The next important step which followed this was an application for transfer of the case to Allahabad for the Sessions Trial and a Jury Trial. It is important to note, however, that the Executive had already made up its mind what was to happen, and before the High Court could decide our application for transfer and Jury, an Extraordinary Gazette was issued by the Government on Monday the 13th of January announcing the appointment of the Additional Sessions Judge who was to try this case. It follows of course that our application for a Jury Trial was naturally turned down.

Interviews with our friends and Council in Jail and elsewhere have been systematically hampered, as is shown by our application for proper facilities, interviews etc: to conduct our Defence (10.2.30). Throughout the whole period from the time that we were brought to Meerut a heavy censorship of our correspondence has been carried on. This question of censorship especially applies to the correspondence between myself and my relatives, and our Defence Committee in London. I have ample evidence in my possession of letters half and two-thirds scored out, and further evidence of letters that have been suppressed

altogether. That this systematic examination and censorship has been carried on by the Prosecution is amply borne out by the evidence of Abdul Aziz P.W, 138, ex-Jailer, District Jail, Meerut, and Lieutenant-Colonel M.A. Rahman P.W. 133, ex-Superintendent, District Jail, Meerut. This is a part from the evidence which I have got of registered letters being sent from the Garden House. I am not going to quibble here whether this is fair or unfair, whether the Prosecution have an undue advantage over us or not, because after all, I have already said I have no illusion about class justice, and at any rate the whole of the bourgeois state machinery is on the side of the Prosecution and naturally they are going to use it, especially in a political case of this character.

Referring again to the memorandum Mr. Wedgwood Benn after his "official enquiry" expresses himself satisfied that all legitimate facilities are being given. Of course we can appreciate the irony of the situation, knowing that this pseudo-Labour-apologist for Imperialism is only repeating parrot-like what the bureaucracy and the Prosecution want him to say.

Among the many interesting incidents that have happened during the case we have the incident of the arrest of one of the members of our Defence Committee in this very Court compound, and this arrest was carried out under the orders of none other than Mr. R. A. Horton, the complainant in this case. Another case of harassment of our friends was given when one friends of ours Fazl Elahi came from the Punjab, on his first visit to Meerut, to assist us in Defence matters, the room in which he was staying was raided by the Meerut Police, he was bound at the point of the revolver and a search took place, after which he was released. We naturally raised a protest about this continual harassment of our friends and in explanation of the above incident the Superintendent of Police said that he was sorry, some mistake had been made. It was not a mistake however, this same friend of ours, on his return to the Punjab in July 1930 after the second visit to us, was arrested under Regulation III of 1818, and has not yet been released. I suppose he ought to have taken

warning when the Meerut Police raided him on the first occasion and not visited us again.

Another incident of a like nature is that of another friend of ours, Abani Chaudhuri, from Calcutta this time, who while on a visit to see us was arrested in Meerut and taken back to Calcutta, kept in a lock-up for some time and then later released.

Another matter I should like to refer to is that of the question of bail. On numerous occasions we have applied for bail, in some cases on the question of ill health as in the case of Muzaffar Ahmad and Spratt, and on other occasions asking for bail as a right. In some quarters the illusion is still held that a person should be assumed innocent until he is proved guilty. In this case we have been held in Jail now for two years and four months. Now apart from the disadvantage, inconvenience and difficulty that we are put to in conducting a defence while being kept in Jail, I think we have successfully exploded the myth, if it still remains, about a person being considered innocent until he has been proved guilty. As far as I am concerned our application for bail have at least served the purpose of exposing this fraud of bourgeois justice. The granting of bail to a few after they have spent two years in jail and after some have explained their position does not alter my argument.

This case has shown that a constant watch has been kept by the C.I.D. on workers meetings, Trade Union meetings etc: and a mass of material has been submitted which refers almost entirely to open activities of Trade Unions and the working-class movement in general. For the 'unearthing' by the C.I.D. of these open activities, this court, as was the case in the Lower Court, will no doubt have to congratulate the C.I.D. on their alertness in detecting this 'crime'. In respect of this Court I hold no illusions, any point that has been made by the Defence has usually been brushed aside with the help of the C.P.C. On the other hand any point that has come up that may be useful to the Prosecution or to assist the Court in coming to a 'true' finding in this case has usually been saved. I repeat again that the judiciary in this country plays a second part to the Executive which is the deciding factor.

There is not a more glaring example of the disadvantage to which the accused are put than that of the case of defence witnesses. At the end of the Magistrate's enquiry a general list of Defence witnesses was submitted at the same time I submitted a list of Defence witnesses on my own behalf. The names in my list included a number of persons in the main resident in England. In the early stages of the Trial in this Court I submitted an application to the District Magistrate asking that the persons named residing outside British India should be summoned by the District Magistrate to come to India as my defence witnesses. The District Magistrate refused to issue summonses to these persons on the ground that he had no authority to summon witnesses not to be found in British India or that he had no means of getting such summonses executed. (District Magistrate's order dated 9.3.30.)

Following this an application was made to the Governor General on the 22nd of March 1930 requesting that the authorities in Meerut be directed to issue summonses to these witnesses residing outside British India, that provision be made so that they may be allowed to enter the country and leave it again without being arrested, and that while in India they should not be subject to annoyance by police, etc. The latter points were essential as in some cases these persons have been named by the Prosecution as co-conspirators. A reply was received to this application from the Government on May the 17th, 1930, which said (1) they had no power to summon witnesses from outside India, or directed that they be so summoned; (2) that if such persons wish to come as witnesses the Government of India could not give any undertaking that passports would be granted to them, or that if they enter India they would not be arrested, "if they had done anything which rendered them liable under the law."

In view of this a further attempt was made to get these defence witnesses. An application was made to this Court on the 30th of May 1930, requesting it either (1) to summon these witnesses or (2) to direct the Prosecution to bring them before the Court or (3) issue a commission to record their evidence in England. All

these requests were rejected by this Court by an order on the 4th of August 1930. Thus the position was that while the Prosecution with their unlimited resources could bring eight witnesses from England, several from French possessions in India and one from an Indian State, the defence could not even get summonses issued for their defence witnesses.

In my statement I have dealt almost entirely with the workers' struggle, not in the abstract but dealing with the actual facts and incidents that have taken place, such as strikes, the workers' conditions, the building of their organisations, the Trade Unions etc. I have tried to give a picture of bourgeois society as it is, based upon exploitation, suffering and misery, and I have also tried to show the workers' struggle against this state of society.

I have shown conclusively I think that this trial is an attack upon the working-class movement and specially the militant Trade Union Movement. The trial as such is a political trial, and a political trial of this character only marks the state of panic that the bourgeoisie have got into, and it has also registered the fact that they are going along the path to their own destruction. In my opinion there is no evidence before the Court to support the particular charge of the Prosecution. Nevertheless I do not shirk the responsibility of anything that I have done while I have been in India. On the other hand, as a Communist, I am proud of the fact that I have been afforded an opportunity of participating in the class-struggle with my Indian comrades.

Communism is a general, political policy which is being more and more supported by millions of workers, and which is spreading throughout the world to-day cannot be stopped by persecution and repression. The Communist Party is the vanguard of the working class movement, it is the only Party which is capable of leading the workers to their goal, the overthrow of capitalism and Imperialism, and the establishment of a socialist state of society. I believe that the proletarian revolution will come and that Communism will triumph. As a worker, if I did not think this it would be hardly worthwhile continuing to live in a system of society such as I have described that exists today.

I am confident that this trial will have the very opposite effect to that which the Prosecution desire, it will awaken the consciousness of the masses of India and at the same time will focus the attention of the workers of Great Britain on the struggle of the exploited colonial masses, and will undoubtedly be responsible for rousing the workers of Great Britain to take a more active part in the fight against Imperialism and for the freedom of the colonial slaves.

Fortunately, the Government being that of representatives of the Labour Party, the workers will surely be disillusioned as to the role that this Party is playing in acting as the lackey of Imperialism, and out-doing even the die hard Tory Party in carrying on a reign of terror in India, and throughout the Empire.

This trial as such marks the fact that the working-class of India is emerging as a powerful political factor and as a challenge to British Imperialism. It is for the workers now to rally, to organise and to carry on the struggle to a successful conclusion, the final overthrow of Imperialism and the setting up of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

P. 638. As I have said I met Hutchinson on one or two occasions and I did visit Khar on one Sunday evening and I had dinner with Hutchinson. The only persons present on that occasion were Mrs. Subasini Nambiar, Hutchinson and myself.

The age I have given in this Court is my correct age. If there is anything different in my passport it is a mistake.

Q. What about your defence witnesses, that is those to whom the Magistrate can issue summonses?

A. I will let the Court know later about this.

Q. You have read over your statement more than once and it has been corrected and amended as requested by you. Are you now satisfied that the above is a correct account of your statement to the Court?

A. Yes.

Sd/- R. L. Yorke  
22-7-31.

Sd/- B. F. Bradley  
22-7-31.

Certified that the above is a full and true account of the statement made by accused, taken down in my presence by stenographers, and transcribed by them, and corrected and amended as and where requested by accused and admitted by him to be a correct record of his statement.

Sd/- R. L. Yorke  
22-7-31.

## The Speech of the Prosecutor in the Meerut Case

*[The opening speech of the Government Prosecutor, Mr. Langford James, in the case against the thirty-three Indian and British working-class leaders at Meerut is of particular interest for the light that it throws on the character of this important political trial, because it is a speech primarily directed, not against the accused, but against the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Government, the Communist International, and the theory of Marxism and Leninism itself, reflecting with remarkable frankness the mixture of sneering, hatred and bewilderment which these subjects arouse in the bourgeoisie. Accordingly, we propose to reproduce the main portions from the verbatim report.]*

*June 12, 1929.*

May it please Your Honour,—The accused in this case stand charged with a conspiracy to deprive His Majesty of the sovereignty of India, and the case for the Prosecution is that they have sought to do that by means of a revolution. Now the slogan, which most satisfactorily, to my mind, sums up their intentions, is "Long Live Revolution". A revolution is ordinarily an incident in time. It happens. It is done away with, and it gives place to that brighter and better state of things which, any way in the minds of its authors, it is destined to usher in. But the revolution which these accused have conspired for, and which they have visualised, is indeed a revolution that lives long. It goes on. It is a continuing and almost perpetual revolution. Now that is a point which I shall have to deal with much later on. At the moment I should like to remove one possible misunderstanding. This revolution that these



accused have visualised is not a national revolution. It is an anti-national revolution.

They appear to me to entertain feelings of hatred towards a very large number of people, but it is reserved for those gentlemen, who are usually accredited with working for the attainment of Swaraj in India, it is reserved for these gentlemen to excite the particular odium of these accused. The Indian National Congress is stigmatised as a misguided bourgeois body, which has to be captured and converted to the peculiar views of these accused or else destroyed. Pandit Motilal Nehru is regarded by them as a dangerous patriot. His son, Jawaharlal Nehru, is dubbed a tepid reformist. Mr. Subash Chunder Bose is a bourgeois and a somewhat ludicrous careerist. Gandhi they regard and dislike as a grotesque reactionary. In his lifetime Lala Lajpat Rai was stigmatised as being personally a scoundrel and politically dangerous, while the late C. R. Das is written down as a poltroon.

Now the quarrel which these accused have with all these gentlemen, who are generally looked upon as the Leaders of Nationalist thought in India, the quarrel they have with them—and I am here using a word dear to the heart of the Bolsheviks—is that their ideology is all wrong. They are striving, or at present are accredited with striving, for independence in India. That is a hopelessly wrong ideology, according to the views of these accused. Mr. Gandhi's crime is enhanced by two other considerations. He has the bad taste to have religious scruples, and there is no God at all in the Mecca to which these gentlemen look. Then secondly, he had the bad taste, after having, according to them, fomented revolution to a point at which it was possible, to have turned back in the day of victory, because of the horrors at Chauri Chaura.

Now I have stressed this point somewhat, because it seemed to me on reading the newspapers that there was some tendency to dub these accused persons as national patriots. They may be innocent or they may be guilty, but I think that they will agree with me entirely that there is no question of their being nationalists, and I feel that it must be particularly galling to them that this idea should have got abroad.

Now the object in fact which these accused had is, I repeat, anti-nationalist. They would, I think, say it was international, but the two words are really the same. Their object was, shortly put, to replace the Government of His Majesty King George in India, and in its place to put the Government of the Third Communist International. It might also fairly be stated that was in effect to substitute for the Government of His Majesty the Government of Mr. Stalin as he is now called. In fact, it is the case for the Prosecution that these accused are Bolsheviks, that is to say that they aim at the Bolshevik ideal, and that they have designed and worked to instal in India the same rule as exists in Russia.

Now, giving the matter as much attention as I have been able to do, it appears to me that to be a Bolshevik of unimpeachable character you require certain definite qualifications to which the ordinary man does not aspire. You do not love your country, you are anti-country, you are anti-God, and you are anti-family. In fact, I think it fair to say that a Bolshevik of unimpeachable character is anti-everything which the normal man considers decent. You have ruthlessly to hate those who differ from your views, and when the proper time arrives you have as ruthlessly to kill them. And last, but by no means least, I think it is quite essential that you should have no sense of humour.

Now I have indicated, and I shall have to indicate more later on, this anti-country or anti-national motive. With regard to the point of being anti-God I was much struck by a letter published in the *Pioneer* from seven of these accused persons. The reason for the letter is of little importance, but to make them intelligible, let me tell you in a word what happened. Motilal Nehru wrote a letter to the *Pioneer* in which he stated certain things against the accused, or appeared to do so. He subsequently made it clear that he did that by inadvertence. I particularly allude to the matter in that way, because I do not wish to enter into the subject of dispute between them and Pandit Nehru. In answer to Mr. Nehru's letter they wished to make the point that the Red letters which, as I read in the papers, are flying round India (I have not been honoured with one myself)—that the Red letters did not emanate from any Bolshevik conspiracy, and the argument—and an excellent

argument it is—which they used is this. The phrase "God and the Soviet" which occurs in one of them should be enough to make it clear that whatever their origin it is not communist.

I entirely agree. There can be no God according to the Soviet creed, and a large part of their propaganda is directed to destroying belief in God, whether he be the God of the Christian, the Jew, the Muhammadan or the Buddhist. The belief in Him is to be destroyed, and if and when the time comes that this reign of destruction comes to India, I am sure belief in the God of Hinduism will also have to be destroyed. All the religions of the world have to be destroyed, according to these gentlemen, and they have gone the length not only of murdering priests and desecrating churches, but of setting up classes for the young men and young children to preach to them the gospel of anti-God.

Now, obviously, any man with such a mental outfit as I have indicated is not a pleasant fellow-citizen, but I agree that nobody could be indicted for a crime for holding these views. Any man is entitled to hold whatever views he likes, however unpleasant they may be, but Bolshevism is not merely an abstract philosophy. It is a rule of life. At any rate its disciples have gathered from it a working rule of life, incidentally one much to be reckoned with by those on whom it operates. There is a definite objective, and there are definite methods by which that objective is to be gained. Now in as much as we who appear for the Prosecution propose to argue that the agreement, the mere agreement to put in practice the creed of the Communist International and to carry out its programme, *ipso facto* constitutes an offence under Section 121A, whether, as we shall prove in this case, the programme has actually been carried out or not.....

### **Counsel for One of the Accused**

Before letting my learned friend proceed, I would like to point out that he is giving his opinion in his address which must be confined to the statement of his case. He has in his own address a few minutes back stated that it is no offence to be against God, or to show any irreligious tendency. Has this question then any bearing upon the case? I submit that Your Honour will not allow

my learned friend to make use of his own opinion in his address for the purpose of propaganda against the accused.

**Mr. Langford James**

I think it would be asking as much of Council for the Defence as it is of asking a policeman to recognise a barrister to know what the case was about on the first day of the hearing and before it has been opened by the Prosecution. But I must beg that I am not interrupted in the course of this address. I have considered most carefully what it is necessary for us to prove in this case, and I do not propose to introduce any irrelevant matter. If the statement of the case is propaganda against the accused, I am sorry, but I am afraid that the statement of this case is propaganda against the accused, but that cannot be helped. If the accused have broken the law of the land and have broken it in a manner which the public may think is a grotesque manner, it is not my fault.

Now, Your Honour, a large number of people, when you mention Russia, connect it with bloodshed and a ruthless reign of terror and with the Cheka (now, I understand, known as the O.G.P.U.). That is a diagnosis of the situation, which although it is somewhat superficial, at any rate contains the germs of truth. I hope to satisfy you that according to the programme of this body in Moscow, violence, bloodshed and civil war is inevitable, and I should say that a reign of terror is unavoidable. But as I said before, it will be necessary for us to go a little more deeply into the matter and I propose to discuss as shortly as possible the origin, the objective, the organisation, and the methods and tactics of this Third International.

The origin need not detain us very long. Your Honour will remember, as a matter of history, that in the early part of the year 1917, a revolution took place in Russia. At that time the Bolshevik Party—which means the Party of the Majority—it sounds a ridiculous misnomer, because, as I shall show, they are a tiny minority, but the name comes from a certain conference held in London, at which what might be called the Left-wing of this Party was in favour of a larger programme than the other Wing who

were called the Mensheviks (Minority Party). Now coming back to Russia in the early part of 1917, in fact in February, a revolution was accomplished. At that time the Bolsheviks attempted to overthrow the Government of the Tsar and seize the State, and they issued a very interesting manifesto, but in fact the revolution was accomplished by people whom they now call the Social Democrats, and who are associated in the minds of most people with Kerensky, and the Government of Russia came into the hands of the Kerensky group. The Tsar was deposed.

Later in the year, in fact in October, according to one calendar, and in November, according to another, the Bolsheviks organised and carried through a revolution against the Kerensky Government and they overthrew the Kerensky Government and seized the power themselves. In passing, it may be noted that this Bolshevik body, which later came to be known as the Communist Party in Russia, claims to have had in its ranks at the time of this successful revolution rather less than 24,000 men.

I have spoken of the Communist International. It is not the same thing as the Government of Russia ostensibly and outwardly. In effect it has exactly the same objective and exactly the same plan of action, and it is dominated by exactly the same people. Now it came into existence in this way. In the year 1864 there was established in London a First International, that is to say an International of Labour. This International died. In 1889 there was established a Second International at Paris. This Second International was in existence at the beginning of the Great War, and it still exists. It has continued to exist and it is of some little importance in this case because it is known as the Yellow or Amsterdam International and from it has been coined the phrase to be Amsterdamed.

To be Amsterdamed means that you hold rational feelings with regard to the labour question. and rationalisation is one of the hated things in the Communist International. I want to put it as fairly as possible, I suppose it may be said that this Amsterdam International aims at the establishment of Socialism according to

its views by peaceful and constitutional methods, whereas the Third International holds most strongly that no such method is a possibility. In any case I will ask Your Honour to note that there is war to the knife between this International in Moscow, the Red International, and the other International in Amsterdam, the Yellow International, and to be a Yellow man is a dreadful crime in Moscow.

(This speech of the Prosecutor of Meerut Conspiracy Case was published in "The LABOUR MONTHLY", London, in its issue of January, February and March 1930. The remaining portion of the Prosecutor's speech is given in Appendix (ii) of this Volume.)

# **STATEMENT OF S.A. DANGE**

**Accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case**

**BEFORE R. L. YORKE, Esqr., I.C.S.**

*Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut, U.P., India*

**Delivered from 26th October 1931 to  
5th January 1932**

**For 90 hours**

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## Before the Trial Court of Meerut Conspiracy Case

*Statement of S. A. Dange*

**(The Court Records of the Proceedings of the Case)**

*In the Court of R. L. Yorke, I.C.S. Addl. Sessions Judge, Meerut*

In the case of King-Emperor Vs. P. Spratt and others Examination of S. A. Dange accused under Section 342 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, made before me R. L. Yorke Addl. Sessions Judge at Meerut on the 26th day of October 1931.

My name is Sripat Amrit Dange; my father's name is Amrit Raghunath Dange; I have no caste as I do not believe in Caste; 31 years of age; by occupation Journalist and Labour organiser, my home is at Bombay, Police Station City of Bombay, District Bombay, I reside at Bombay.

Q. You heard your statement in the Lower Court P. 2613 read out to you on 16-3-31. Is that statement correct?

A. Yes.

Q. The following documents which are in evidence against you may be described as foreign correspondence:—P 1869C, 2328 P2, 1968, 1009, 1606, 1607, 1845, 1633, 76,1345 (34), 2408 P, 1609 and A and 1807 (1), 1610, 2215, 1208 (1), 2412 P, 2419 P, 2409 P, 2211, 2057 P, 2413 P2, 807, 1803, and 1203. Have you anything to say about this evidence?

A. I am technically charged with conspiracy to deprive the King of his sovereignty of British India. But as has already been said I am being tried for subscribing to the principles of Communism, and thereby endangering not only Government "but the whole of the established order of society". (Mr. Kemp's speech in the High Court). Sir James Crerar in his speech on the Public Safety Bill in September 1928 wanted the suppression of Communist views to save the "established order of society". The Viceroy in a speech in Calcutta at the end of 1928 referring to us



said, "While every allowance must be made for the genuine grievances which the labouring classes feel there can be no doubt that the unrest of the past years has been due in no small measure to the activities of certain persons, whose end is rather to promote anti-social purposes than to secure the betterment of the workmen's lot. The disquieting spread of the methods of Communism has for some time been causing my Government anxiety. All classes alike are threatened by the spread of these doctrines and no Government can afford to ignore this insidious danger" (Exhibit P 1206). So on 20th March, 1929 the Government removed 32 centres of its anxiety and locked them inside the Meerut Prison. For three years 'this insidious danger' has been locked inside the prison by the big round up and locked outside India by the Public Safety Ordinance and Sea Customs Act. I would have been quite pleased to stay in if I had been shown that excellent 'established society, culture', religion', etc. which we were threatening had now improved for the benefit of mankind and contributed to the happiness of the millions of workers, peasants and soldiers. The element of disruption being removed, stability and happiness should have grown.

But the sovereignty of the representative of His Majesty was challenged most unceremoniously, and His Excellency speaking at the Associated Chambers of Commerce said (15th December 1930) "An unkind friend reminded me that when I addressed your meeting two years ago I ventured on the statement that the general position gave good ground for sober optimism. For a year or so after that meeting of 1928, it is true the position showed no great change for the worse, but the Wall Street collapse of October 1929 proved to be the beginning of an acute world depression." That unkind friend forgot to tell the Viceroy that the locking of Communists in Meerut Prison was not going to help his established capitalist society. Capitalist society was crumbling down under the weight of its own contradictions and it was not "the insidious danger" of Communism that had any hand in it. The foreign editor of the Journal De Geneva writes, "The world never had institutions which seemed to be more firmly established than the Parliament at Westminster, the British fleet

and the pound sterling. The people were wont to consider these as the chief pillars of international life. The Parliament was the prototype of Democracy, the fleet was the guardian of the security of the sea and the pound sterling was the world currency par excellence. In less than three months the British nation has abandoned the traditional party politics of its Parliamentary institutions, it has witnessed a formidable mutiny among the crew of its fleet and now it is assisting with a hardened heart the fall of the pound sterling. These are great trials hard even for a people with soul so well seasoned." These are great trials hard even for a Capitalism so well seasoned with 4,000 millions pounds of foreign investment. To boast before the world of an "Ideal Democracy" and yet to suspend it and pass a budget by means of an ordinance (Order in Council) is not a great trial, but a great revelation to those who are enamoured of Parliamentary Democracy. When Imperialism is fooling the Indian bourgeois patriots with discussions over the skeletons of Parliamentary structure and teaching them school-boy stories of Robert Bruce it is a humiliation for it to appear next minute with an electioneering campaign that openly asks for a Dictatorship, to save the nation—that is Capitalism. Democracy Parliament, established order of society and His Majesty's private purse in the bargain, are being assailed by the international bankers' cabal while adherents of the Communist International in the Empire do not number more than a few thousands. The overthrow of British Imperialism is not an act of Communist conspiracy. It is already going on before our very eyes for the last ten years. And a man, who helped that Imperialism with crores of the Indian workers' and peasants' money, when he was the Finance Member of the Government of India, in order that "established order," sovereignty, and the sovereign may not go down, has lost his faith in his own Capitalism and says: "I am not sure that we do not need a new political and economic technique to deal with the situation. I am not sure we should not be wise to take a leaf out of the books of both Italy and Russia in the matter of organised thinking and planning." (Times of India, 18th July, 1931.) Sir Basil Blackett, who says the above, has purposely confused

Fascism with Bolshevism but the yearning of this director of the Bank of England for "a new political and economic technique" is unmistakable. Capitalism is bankrupt and looks everywhere, even to Bolshevism, to lift it out of the grave it is sinking in. We Communists are accused of planning the ruin of all capitalists. But the most brainy fellow of British Capitalism Professor J. M. Keynes proposed that very thing, by which, of course, he thinks he can re-organise Capitalism. "Individually we should all be 'ruined' but collectively we should be much as before. Perhaps indeed it is an attractive alternative, this committing of suicide by the capitalists. For under the pressure of hardship and of excitement we might find out some much better ways of managing our affairs." The great economist is quite sure that the "suicide of capitalists" is attractive. We agree with him in his literal sense. But with all his cleverness he is only fumbling for a way. He is not sure and looks to "some much better ways", and he, of course, does not know who will show it. It is we Communists, it is Marxism-Leninism, the Communist International which has better way: overthrow of Capitalism, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, then orderly economic planning of socialist life and thus freeing the world from anarchy and chaos. That is the "much better way"—the only way.

The British Empire that sovereignty against which we are said to be conspiring is nearly half conquered and is no longer sovereign. It is a colony of American Imperialism. When we speak of making India and Britain a Soviet Republic you falsely accuse us of bringing in Russian rule and supplanting the Empire. But when thieves fall out they let out their secrets to their victims, so is your secret out. Henderson goes out telling the world "We were told that the country would not have Russian Dictatorship, German Dictatorship or for that matter even the Dictatorship of the British Trade Union Council. But the so-called National Government is prepared to accept the Dictatorship of American bankers at the cost of the British working-class." Yet with the backing of the two mighty Imperialisms of U.S.A. and France British Capitalism cannot stave off its ruin. What better authority can there be on this

point than the brilliant Governor of the Bank of England, Mr. Montague Norman? In a letter to the Governor of the Bank of France, M. Moret, he writes: "Unless drastic measures are taken to save it, the capitalist system throughout the civilised world will be wrecked within a year. I should like this prediction filed for future reference" (quoted by Mr. Wilfred Wellock, M.P. in a recent issue of the *New Leader*). Mr. Norman himself made very drastic aeroplane dashes to the Financial Capitals of Europe and America to save the credit of the pound and of the Bank of England, which is the essence of British Capitalism. But he failed. The pity of it is that after 12 years of Governorship of the financial operations of British Capitalism, Mr. Norman still hopes to save it. The capitalist system throughout the civilised world is incapable of any "drastic measures" because those very measures that are proposed to save it, hasten its downfall. The only "drastic measure" to save, not Capitalism, but society, is that the dictatorship of the bankers has to be replaced by the dictatorship of the working-class. But this is no "prediction to be filed for future reference," but an urgent necessity to be worked out in reality, if society is to be saved from a return to barbarism and destruction of all its achievements.

If Capitalism is collapsing in Britain, it is not more stable in India. That "established order of society," which the knights of a declining Imperialism have come forward to defend by our arrest has escaped their control. We were said to be the cause of industrial ruin and unrest. We were removed and two and a half years after, Sir George Rainy comes before the Legislative Assembly and tells them "the present economic depression in India is beyond the control of the Government" (September 10, 1931). The State of the bourgeoisie is impotent to save its own class. The champion of parasitic landlordism, Sir Fazle Hussain supporting the spokesman of Imperialism said: "It was equally true that no Local Government could put the matters right in a couple of years", and as if to hearten his class he went on: "It was also not right to get into the mood that India was the only country that was badly affected." He showed by way of illustration what sort of conditions existed within the British Empire.

Imperialism-Capitalism were bankrupt not only within India but in the whole Empire. Their conspiracy of bankruptcy had a 'foreign part' and an 'Indian part'. Poor Fazle is optimistic and thinks his class can get up after two years. So they used to say about dead Czarism also! You may have a short flutter of life again, but you have to make way for Communism, for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. It is rising from the ruins of your own economy. The capitalist State is crumbling and even if all the Mahatmas collect all the taxes from the peasantry for you, the State is collapsing.

Like mean demagogues, our accusers misrepresent us before the people and tell them that we are out against culture, against their family and happiness. And the nationalist patriots join them in that game. I can only throw in their face their own report and the admission of their own men. An official report quoted by the Times of India (17th October, 1931) says: "In several features traffic in women resembles cattle-theft. To indulge in it brings no disgrace in the eyes of the public. At one place men were caught kidnapping by pushing along a handcart containing a concealed double compartment into which they put likely-looking girls whom they espied in the street." That is the value of women in your society. You have to set up a commission of the League of Nations to stop the international capitalist trading in girls. And yet the hiring intellectuals of Capitalism are not ashamed to say that it is Communism that abolishes the family. Mian Shah Nawaz said in the Assembly (31st March, 1931) that "he knew from his own knowledge that men were driven to selling their daughters in order to get money to pay their obligations in the shape of land revenue and the money-lenders' interest." Who is thus abolishing the family? We or Capitalism? All the patriotic bourgeois and imperialists stand for the maintenance of this "established order." When they find they cannot do it, they wreak their vengeance on the heads of the revolutionary workers and peasants who fight under their vanguard, the Communist Party and on the heads of those revolutionary intellectuals who refuse the Mahatmic compromise and surrender to Imperialism. But that is not going to help. Capitalism leads inevitably to Communism. It is a necessity if society is to be saved. It is not a criminal conspiracy but a scientific system of social reconstruction.

## **PART I**

### **WHAT I BELIEVE IN**

#### **THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL GROWTH AND THE CLASS-STRUGGLE IN THE FOREIGN COUNTRIES FROM WHICH MARXISM IS DERIVED**

**Q.** The following documents relate to your connection with the Communist Party of India:

**P.** 1287 (11), 1140, 1141, 840, 1605, 1207 (1) (=409), 989 Kranti of 4-6-27 and 16-6-27, 1684, 1285, 1287 (2), (3), 2055C, 1295, 1300, 1310, 1296, 1208 (3), (4), and 1574. Have you anything to say about this evidence?

#### **SECTION 1: THE BIRTH OF CLASSES AND THE RISE OF CAPITALISM-IMPERIALISM: PARAS 1—32**

##### **1. Our object not the same as alleged by the Prosecution**

**A.** In answer to a question from the Magistrate in the Lower Court, I had said that I was a Communist and I affirm the statement now. I will explain what I understand by Communism and what my aims and objects as a Communist are. I do not want to do this in order to mark myself off, by any special interpretation of "my own" from the already existing authoritative expositions of the aims and objects of Communism, found in the works of Lenin and others. Till the epoch of Proletarian Revolutions and a certain building up of Socialism is over, the necessity of materially enlarging the details of the further aims of Communism will not arise. For the present period the guidance of Leninism is quite sufficient. Therefore, I could have disposed of the whole question of my aims by pointing out to the most authoritative works of Marx and Lenin. Some of these are put in as Prosecution exhibits also—viz. "The Communist Manifesto of 1847" (P. 21), "Capital" (P. 455), "The Civil War in France" (P. 1179), (D. 409), "Imperialism" (P. 528), "State and Revolution" (P. 1092), "On the Road to Insurrection" (P. 979), "Left Wing Communism" (P. 975), Bukharin's "Historical Materialism" (P. 864). So also the several theses adopted by the

World Congresses of the Communist International. In order to convince the Court about the aims and objects of the Communists and to show that they are quite the same as they are represented by the Prosecution to be in their complaint, they (the Prosecution) have exhibited more than a hundred books, and after the digest of so many volumes they have formulated a complaint and delivered an Opening Address to the Court which shows they have either not understood our aims or have purposely misrepresented them. I am not prepared to believe that the Prosecution, represented by the best available brains of bourgeois culture, are incapable of an intellectual understanding of the literature. I would rather say that their class duty dictates to them the latter course. Therefore my aims as a Communist are not the same as shown by the Prosecution nor is their interpretation of my activities correct.

## **2. Fundamental proposition of the Communist Manifesto**

The theory and practice of Communism which is also known as Marxism and Leninism was first scientifically formulated by Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895). Both Marx and Engels were Germans, both of them in their early life took part in the revolutionary upheavals in Germany. both were champions of the working-class and peasantry and were, therefore, expelled from Germany. After expulsion, Marx and Engels lived in England, the classical home of Capitalism. While there Marx studied the development of Capitalism, how the working-class creates the wealth of society and how it is appropriated by the capitalist class and how at a certain stage of development it becomes necessary to overthrow Capitalism and establish Socialism. He observed how Capitalism developed in England and the Continent, the displacement of handicraft production of English artisans by English capitalists, owning the newly invented machinery, the capture of political power from the hands of the old feudal lords and merchants by the new bourgeoisie. He saw how in this struggle the working-class and peasantry was used by the rising bourgeoisie to fight its class battles and was after the struggle exploited by the bourgeoisie, and he formulated the

fundamental proposition in the Communist Manifesto—"that in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organisation necessarily following from it formed the basis upon which is build up and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch, and consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class-struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class-struggles forms a development in which a stage now been reached, where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without at the same time and once for all emancipating society at large, from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction and class-struggle." (P. 21). The proposition states that the classes arose from the dissolution of the primitive classless society, when private property arose. One class was of those who owned the means of production, land etc. and another of those who worked and gave the surplus to the owners. The exploiting class dominated and governed society in its own interest. The conflict of economic interests has led to a continuous class war (sometimes violent, sometimes peaceful) and now in the present epoch of Capitalism a stage has come where society cannot move forward without once for all overthrowing Capitalism and establishing a classless society, that is Socialist society. This is historically inevitable. After the episode of the Paris Commune, Marx emphasised the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat as a transitional stage*. Thus in fact all the fundamental principles of Communism were formulated by Marx and Engels in the period 1842-1895 including the now universally famous slogan "Workers of the World unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains, you have a world to win" which appeared for the first time in the Communist Manifesto issued by the Communist League from London in 1847 and which was also printed as a guiding principles of the first Marxist paper "The Communist" issued in September 1847 by Engels



### **3. Communism is neither German, Russian nor English**

There is a lot of talk going round about "Moscow Road" and "Moscow Ideas". It is said that Communism is a Russian growth unsuitable to any other soil and especially the Indian. I may point out that neither Marx nor Engels were Russian. By birth they were German, by long residence they were English and their study and writings were done in England. Communism would be German according to the birth of its founders, and English according to the place of its formulation and publication, French according to its first experiment and Russian according to its second and successful experiment. But such a labelling is absurd and unscientific. Marxism has no nationality because it is a science of social construction. The fundamental proposition of Marxism applies to every social group wherever it exists. The differences in its application arise, not from differences of nationality, religion or caste, but from differences in the economic development of the particular social group in a particular historical epoch. In the present epoch of Imperialism the application of Marxism to Russia, India, and China will be predominantly similar, not because Lenin was a Russian and the Communists in India and China follow Leninism and observe "Lenin Days," but because these three semi-continents are similar in economic development, that is they are predominantly agrarian and feudal. While the application of Marxism to countries like England, Germany and America will be somewhat different because of the high industrialisation there. But it must be remembered that these differences will not be very emphatic. In its main outlines, the line of advance will be highly similar. Thus when I follow Marxism, Leninism or Communism, I am not following a method of this country or that but the method of reconstruction of society which is proved historically to be necessary and correct.

### **4. Our aim—to replace world capitalist economy by a world system of Communism**

My aim as a Communist is to replace world capitalist economy by a world system of Communism. Now the necessity for this

arises out of the historical development of modern society which threatens to degrade and even destroy the human race if capitalist economy were not overthrown. This necessity has nothing to do with the question whether individual capitalists are charitable and very religious men or a most hateful pack of scoundrels. Even if they were most "ideal men" living on two pennies a day, eating from iron utensils, in their private life, the capitalist economy would have to be overthrown and replaced by a socialist economy because the former is no longer compatible with the growth of society. So when Communists speak of their aim they do not speak of it, as if it is ordained by some holy book descended from heaven or because it is preached by an extraordinary genius like that of Marx or Lenin, such as are cast forth by Nature once in centuries. Their aim is a historical inevitability, the inexorable demand born out of social growth of centuries. "The theoretical conclusions of Communists are in no way based on the ideas or principles that have been invented by this or that would be universal reformer. They merely express in general terms actual relations springing from an existing class-struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes," wrote Marx himself in the famous Manifesto of 1847.

### **5. Existing system not eternal**

The existing capitalist economy governing the whole world did not exist from time immemorial. It is a well-known historical fact that Capitalism arose after the mechanical inventions, the great changes in the technique of production, exchange and transport and the social revolution following from them. It is a commonplace lesson of every school text-book of history that the modern capitalist economy and the industrial powers in the world were born from the industrial and technical revolutions of the 18th and 19th century. We all know that formerly there were barons, landlords and kings on one side and small towns and castles, artisans and handicraftsmen, handloom weavers and the small merchants on the other; that all these have vanished. In their place have sprung up big industrial companies, huge cartels, finance-kings and banks on the one hand, and a huge army of

workers and petty-bourgeois employees on the other. An unlimited accumulation of wealth at one end of the pole and accumulation of misery at the other. This development has been going on under our very eyes, giving birth to new forms of class-struggle. The changed conditions, the new bourgeois economy, was the outcome of the new technology of society the new instruments of production and exchange, that are being daily perfected more and more.

#### **6. Its characteristics—Monopoly of the means of production**

The characteristic features of this capitalist economy which dominates the world today are these: The monopoly ownership of the most vital means of production of social necessities by the capitalist class and big landlords, the existence of a propertyless wage-earning class which being deprived of the means of production is compelled to sell its labour power to the capitalist class; the production of commodities for profit, and linked up with all this the planless and anarchic method of production as a whole.

The characteristics of capitalist economy are to be found in their highly developed form in those imperialist countries where Capitalism has been developing in the 19th century. The monopolisation of the means of production by the capitalist class and a whole propertyless population at their mercy are a condition at their highest point of development in America, England, France, Germany and Japan. Though these countries by themselves are not a very substantial part of the world either in territory or in population, yet their economy, the imperialist economy dominates the whole world in all its branches of life.

The monopolisation of the means of production by the capitalist class has not been brought about by what is called the accumulation of the honest returns of enterprise, the abstinence of the capitalist class in not spending away all its profits but charitably and most humanly reinvesting them in industry so that the poor may get work and be fed and humanity attain happiness. Such an idea of capitalist process is reserved for the priest to preach from the pulpit to the gullible, and the school

master to the pupils so that they may not revolt against bourgeois property.

### **7. Monopoly brought about by force**

The monopolisation of the means of production by the capitalist class has been brought about by violent robbery and forcible expropriation of the artisans of the middle ages, the violent expropriation of the peasantry and the feudal landlords by the new bourgeoisie, and by wholesale robbery of such feudal nations like India and China by the Capitalism of Europe and America. The primary accumulation of feudal property and afterwards of bourgeois property is a tale of nothing but bloody violence on English farmers by English landlords, of opium wars of the spoliation of Begums and Nawabs, of rate wars and wars for concessions of exploitation and finally imperialist world wars. Accumulation of capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie is accompanied by the ruthless exploitation of child and woman labour, by the horrible atrocities on a rebellious working-class, trying to get a few more rupees and a few less hours of work. "Capital is born into the world oozing with blood from head to foot," so said Marx.

### **8. Capitalism civilises—why then rebel?**

But an objection may be raised that these are stories that belong to the dead past, why unearth them now? Today at least Capitalism is trying its best to give better conditions of work to the workers, who would be nowhere if capitalists were not to run their factories. Are not the capitalists taking you by their side on the highest ruling authority of the Empire—the British Cabinet? They are instituting great welfare schemes for the workers. They are prohibiting child labour in factories and woman labour in mines. In the best capitalist countries they are spending millions to feed the unemployed. Then why complain against Capitalism?

If capitalists have the monopoly of the means of production, of the great wealth-producing factors, why grumble against that? Has not Capitalism developed the whole world from marshy jungles into wealth-producing populated countries with culture,

civilisation and all the best things that could be obtained under the sun? There are some defects in the capitalist system, no doubt about it. It has its bad features, as everything else in the world has. But then the Communists alone have not the monopoly of the best means for removing these evils. There are others also who are as much anxious about society, workers, and all. They too are trying to remove social evils. Let us "all" unite for the good of humanity. Such are the arguments of many petty-bourgeois reformists.

D/- 27.10.31.

### **9. We appreciate progress under Capitalism**

We cannot afford in the first place to bury the hatchet and forget history. History is a great account-book and balance-sheet of every epoch of the class-struggle of the great concern called society. When a great concern is failing, affecting the lives of 2,000 million people, it is impossible to take over charge of it and reconstruct it without its previous account-book. Up till now in all the historical epochs, all the misery has been credited to our side, while all the good things of life have been pocketed once by feudalism and next by the bourgeoisie. But even supposing for a moment we consent to forget history, consent to let bygones be bygones, even supposing that the whole bourgeoisie has been overtaken by a complete "change of heart," we cannot pull on with Capitalism. Even if every bourgeois were to turn out tomorrow in the coarsest Sabarmati cottons, begin to live on goat's milk and cucumbers and call his workers and tenants, "my dear brother," while keeping intact the present property relations, still Capitalism must be overthrown.

There is no school of thought in the world which appreciates and assesses the world of Capitalism at its true and highest value as much as Marxism does. "The bourgeoisie during its rule of scarce one hundred years has created more massive and colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjugation of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam navigation railways,

electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces \slumbered in the lap of social labour?" (Manifesto—Marx). This was written in 1847 by the founders of Communism. Since then subjugation of nature's forces to man has gone still further. Railways are superseded by air-ways, canalisation of rivers is fading into canalisation of oceans if they dare to obstruct man's traffic. From electric telegraphs we have moved into television, and the old feudal soldier of the Bikaner desert is not now surprised to see his son jump from the jerking dromedary into the giant dirigible. The bourgeoisie has done all this, and that is why it is time now for it to be overthrown, just as it overthrew its predecessor, because it is no longer compatible with further progress.

#### **10. What makes it now incompatible with progress—nature and society—the process of production**

What is it that has made the system suddenly incompatible with further social development, when for so long it worked so hard and so nice and created a new world? The element that has made it so, we call "the contradiction between the productive forces and production relations." What does it mean?

Human society ever since it began has had to abstract material energy from Nature; without these loans it could not exist. Society best adapts itself to Nature by abstracting (and appropriating) more energy from Nature; only by increasing this quantity of energy does society succeed in growing. "Every child knows that any nation would perish of hunger, if it should stop work, I shall not say for a year, but only for a few weeks." (Marx's letter.) Men cultivate the ground, raise wheat, rye, maize; they breed and graze animals. They satisfy their demands for food, clothing and shelter.

In order that society may continue to live, this process of production must be constantly renewed. If we assume that at any moment a certain amount of wheat, shoes and shirts have been produced and all these are eaten up and used up, in the same

period, it is clear that production must at once repeat its cycle; they have to be *reproduced*. The raw material like cotton and also the instrument which made it into cloth, all deteriorate and have to be reproduced. In this process of production and reproduction, the *balance* between what you have been able to produce and what you have spent or it has been necessary for you to spend is the decisive element in the growth of society.

For example, a certain society, like that of the aboriginal Bhils or certain groups closed in the interior of Africa, which must devote all its working time to covering its most rudimentary needs, will consume all its produce as rapidly as new products are produced. If half the year it gathers mulberries and half the year it spins on a takli it will have spent its old mulberries, by the time it has spun some cotton for itself, and by the time it gathers new, it has worn out its takli product and must spin again and so on. This society will remain at the same low level of existence.

### **11. Technology, the material measure of progress**

But if by reason of machinery and tools, the same quantity of necessary produce is obtained in half the time, that society will get time to devote the saving in time to "culture" or obtaining other useful products. Society will grow. So the growth of society depends on the *productivity of social labour*. It means the relations between the quantity of product obtained and the quantity of labour expended. Obviously the productivity of labour is a precise measure of the 'balance' between society and nature. The expenditure of labour consists of two components: the labour that is crystallised and transferred into instruments of production, and the "living labour", i.e. direct expenditure of working energy. The material factors of the productivity of labour as a quantity are the quantity of products obtained; second, the quantity of instruments of production; third, the quantity of the productive forces, i.e. living workers. All these taken together become "the material productive forces of society." If in the case of a certain society we know what kinds of instruments it controls and how many, what kinds of workers and how many, we shall also know the productivity of social labour and what will be the

degree to which that society has conquered nature. For example, if we know that a Sabarmati-Ashram-Society on an All India scale requires a hundred million taklis with hundred million spinners to provide the necessary yarn for cloth working at 12 hours a day and side by side with it Soviet India requires ten million spindles with 20,000 spinners working at 7 hours a day only, it can give us a precise material measure for the stage attained by them in the conquest of nature and social evolution.

In trying to change nature with the help of instruments of production (which also determine the distribution and consumption) man changes himself also. If the handloom is evolved into a power-loom the handicraftsman will vanish and the skilled power-loom weaver will come into existence. Motors will produce motor-drivers. Thus instruments and persons are not merely aggregates but they stand in deep interconnection, in a system, all persons and things standing in a definite relation to each other. This technology of society is the material indicator of the relation between society and nature. It is the fundamental characteristic which differentiates one social group from another.

For example, the Mughal Emperor Aurengzeb, in the days when printing was not known, used to copy the Kuran in handwriting and sell it, which was the prevalent mode of producing books. It took days to make one copy and cost one guinea. Today, the same copy is produced on the lithograph by a thousand per hour costing a few annas. Technology has advanced and indicates our higher stage of evolution.

## **12. Instruments determine ideas and classes—their lay-out—they produce a working-class after their own image**

The instruments of labour not only determine the type of labour, they also produce a system of ideas. Human beings are not like tools. They think. But this thinking is also governed by technology and the consequent social structure following from it. The elements in society would therefore be (1) things (2) persons



(3) ideas. These elements stand in a definite relation to each other. Everyone knows that the instruments of production do not stand merely in certain places but *in a certain order*. At any given moment if we study society functioning we can find this easily. For example, the textile mills in Bombay and their looms and spindles are arranged in a definite order, in a definite proportion, so many carding machines for so many spindles, so many spindles for so many looms. Then again all mills have a definite relation of the coal or electricity they consume, the cotton they require, the iron and steel factories they want for meeting their needs of machinery. The relation inside a single factory is fixed. But the relation between one branch of technology, say like textiles, and another, say production of cotton, in the unorganised capitalist society, depends on blind forces, while in an organised socialist system it depends on conscious direction of forces. But still a relation does exist in all society. This relation between different branches of social production and their proportions also determine the structure of human relations of that society. For example, we take textiles. In the feudal days when manufacture of cloth was done by spinning on charkha and weaving on wooden handlooms, the nature of technology determined the order of human relations. Cotton was produced in small patches on village lands, ginned and carded in the cottages and distributed to spinners. The spinners' product was either woven in the same family or given to the village weavers. What was the structure arising from this? There would not be a Central Cotton Committee as we have today in India presided over by a cotton magnate. There could not be a Cotton Exchange because no cotton came to the market operating on an international scale. There could not be mill-owners owing millions of spindles, as millions of spindles could not be fixed in a steel-frame running a thousand spindles at a time and making the instrument so costly and so efficient that necessarily the village spinner could not buy it nor could compete with it. There were of necessity small cotton patches, cottage spinners and weavers unconnected by any

market on a large scale and not subject to a factory system. Similarly in the case of building. The Moghuls could build the beautiful Taj Mahal. Capitalist technique today can produce a like one or even a 'better one. But the Taj Mahal remains a wonder. To whom? To the villager because it is so magnificent. But for the modern men, the men of cities like London and New York it is also a wonder. Their wonder consists in the question, how could the technique of those days produce such a structure? A large part of the wonder consists not in what thing is produced but *how* it is produced. The Moghul Emperor took five years and 20,000 men to produce it. The technology of the time required hundreds of separate artisans, employed thousands of slaves to chisel out the masonry and raise it in months and months. But modern technology would cut the stone with huge electric iron saws, raise it with cranes, get the whole thing planned by delicate instruments and finish the job with a few hundred skilled workers in a few months. The two technologies produce two different labour relations, types of labourers and the order in which they stand to each other. Slaves are incompatible with delicate machinery. The technique determines the organisation of labour in the productive process. The poor technology of ancient times produced things on small scale resulting in a poor exchange process. The economy remained mostly economy in kind. Modern technology makes it possible for a capitalist manufacturer to produce, say, shoes by thousands. As he cannot wear them all, he throws them on the market. He produces "commodities" which is a consequence of change in technology.

In the nationalist literature of India today we find often a reference to the fact that India produced fine muslins in ancient days. The thumb cutting of Dacca weavers is a famous example which millions of orators today use to illustrate the ruthless suppression of Indian Industry by Lancashire. They say that if violence had not been used against these weavers they would

have competed against the finest of Lancashire cloths. There is no doubt about the fact that Dacca weavers produced fine goods and that they were forcibly suppressed. But that does not alter the fact that the social technology of India of those times was poorer than that of Lancashire or India today. As is said above the question is not 'what' things were produced but 'how' they were produced, which shows the stage of social evolution. Dacca muslin of 110 counts requires a weaver to cultivate a peculiar kind of nails and dexterity of fingers over long years. The social time necessary to produce ten yards of that muslin was several hundred times more than what the modern spindles and looms will require. A saving in social expenditure of energy on the same product caused by the two different techniques constitutes our advance. Even the violent suppression and conquest of India was due to the higher technology of Britain, and we would be unfair to the British bourgeoisie if we were not to mention the fact that it suppressed the British weavers also as ruthlessly as it suppressed the Indian.

### **13. Instruments distribute men**

If we observe the relations of men in the productive process we find that the groupings of men are not accomplished in such a manner as to cause the various groups to lie in horizontal line but rather in a vertical line. For example in the conditions of serfdom of the ancient Hindu caste system we find at the top the owners of the estates, sharing their power with the theological autocracy which at the beginning had an economic content. Then we find ministers, petty merchants and at the bottom the peasants; all of them again standing over the heads of the aboriginals, jungle-cleaners and marshy place cleaners, the vanguard of the colonising groups of Kshatrias. In capitalist production relations, men are not only distributed as machinists, railwaymen, textile workers etc., all of whom in spite of great difference between their tasks are working along the same line occupying the same

relative station in production. But above them we find overseers, master mechanics, "salaried employees," then the agents, managers, owners and capitalists. So we find differently constituted relations between persons at work. All of them participate in the labour process. In classifying we may do so by trade or calling and also according to *classes*. On the basis of occupations we shall have smiths, carpenters, weavers etc. Then in the higher class we shall have supervisors, engineers, jobbers, etc. It is quite obvious that the smith, the fitter or the weaver are in a class different from that of the engineer, the supervisor or the jobber. And distinct from them all is the capitalist who has control of all. In spite of the difference in work of the numbers of the first category, they all stand in the same relation in the labour process. But their relation to the capitalist is quite different. The greatest differences here are in the productive function, in the significance of each in the productive process.

The capitalist in his factory distributes and arranges his workers just as he might his tools and machines; but in the capitalist system, the workers cannot distribute the capitalist. This is a relation of "master and servant, with Capital in command". The basis of division of men into different social classes lies in their different functions in the productive process.

#### **14. Distribution of Capital determines distribution of products**

The process of distribution is governed by the process of production. The former is not independent of the latter. As I have already said, in modern technology, each establishment produces a special product and its distribution takes the form of exchange. The manner of production determines the manner of distribution of its products. But in the process of production itself are involved two "distributions", firstly the distribution of persons in the process, and secondly the distribution of tools amongst these

persons. The varying distribution of persons as we have seen is again connected with the distribution of the means of labour. The capitalist and the landlord control the means of labour, factory, land etc; while the worker has no instruments of labour apart from his labour power. The slaves and peasant serfs—like Dublas in Gujarat—do not own even their bodies. It is therefore obvious that the varying function of classes in production is based on the distribution of instruments of production among them. Engels says: "Economy deals not with things but with relations between persons and in the last analysis between classes; but these relations are always bound up with things and appear as things". For example, the current class relations in capitalist society, namely the relations between capitalists and workers are bound with a thing, the instruments of production owned, controlled and used to obtain profits for the former. These instruments like the mills in Bombay are not merely for producing cloth. They also have a special, social significance. They are instruments of exploiting wage labourers. The capitalist obtains profits because he owns the means of production which ultimately means Capital. Thus the distribution of the means of production determines the distribution of the products. The owner of the means of producing cloth has all of it while to the share of the worker falls little of it. It is these class relations which determine in the first place the outline of society, its economic structure.

In a complicated society like the modern the relations of production and consequently of distribution are very complicated and interwoven. But the fundamental scheme of all is the relation between the great groups known as social classes. The system of society will depend on the classes included in society, their mutual position, their functions in the productive forces, the distribution of the instruments of labour. We have a capitalist society if the capitalist is on top; a slave system if the slave owner is on top and in control of every thing; and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat if the workers are on top.

**15. Change in technology changes social structure**

The form of social classes depends on production relations, which in turn depend on the technology of society. So if technology changes, the social classes also must change. Fifty years ago in India large scale production was unknown. The means of production had not advanced beyond simple tools which depended on the skilful use of the workers who wielded them. As the instrument of production was subject to the skill of the worker, production was scattered, and technique could not give birth to large scale production concentrated in a factory and consequently to the class of proletarians of modern capitalist society. With the change in technique the artisan class is being destroyed and a proletariat is in the process of formation. The merchant guild master is vanishing and is being replaced by the modern banks and capitalists. Class relations change with the changes in the productive forces. "These social relations between the producers and the conditions under which they exchange their activities and share in the total act of production, will naturally vary according to the character of production. With the discovery of a new instrument of warfare, the firearms, the whole internal organisation of the army was necessarily altered, the relations within which individuals composed an army and can work as an army were transformed, and the relation of different armies to one another was likewise changed. We thus see that social relations within which individuals produce, the social relations of production, are altered, transformed with the change and development of the material means of production, of the forces of production". (Karl Marx "Wage Labour and Capital".) This in other words is the proposition which I have already quoted. The totality of production relations is the economic structure of society or its mode of production.

**16. The Superstructure—State, religion, art etc.**

The question then arises—are the other phases of social life a product of these production relations or are they an independent growth? These other phases are of a varied character, some of them appearing to be so far removed from a direct relation with

the economic structure of society that they take up appearance of an independent growth. But Marxism states that all the social, political and cultural aspects including religion, art, manners, customs, philosophy etc., are conditioned by the economic structure of society.

In the modern imperialist epoch it requires very little argument to prove that the State conforms to the economic structure. In capitalist society, the capitalists control the means of production, naturally they control the State also. The fusion of the activities of the great banks and trusts with the actions of the State is so naked since the world war, the Governors of big metropolitan banks controlling currencies and economic operations of several States at a time, illustrates the fusion to such an extent that none now can sensibly challenge the proposition that the State is controlled by that class which is dominant in economy—today the bourgeoisie.

Religion is one of the phases of social life that is supposed to be independent of the economic structure. But in this case, the example of the ancient Hindu States will prove our proposition. In the ancient Hindu States and in fact in all medieval States, religion and its theological hierarchy was completely identified with the State, which was controlled by the dominant class in economy, the landowners, slaveowners and barons. Naturally all the actions of the dominant class which were also the actions of the State found sanction in the religion of the time. An excellent example of this is the Law of Manu. In a clear-cut manner and quite ruthlessly he prescribes the law, religion, customs and morality once as applicable to the dominant class or caste (which at that time were interchangeable categories and not rigid and devoid of their economic content as today) and then as applicable to the suppressed class of peasants, serfs or slaves. He frankly says that unless it was so the suppressed class would become dominant and try to alter the relative position of the classes in social life (including the economic) causing a great "disaster". These social standards of the dominant class were to be forced on the subject class by force and violence and the king who would fail to do it would be dethroned by the dominant class. The State,

law, morality, religion, all conform to the needs of the dominant class in the economic structure of society. They abide so long as they are necessary to maintain a certain equilibrium between the contradictory class interests in the structure. It is on the basis of the economic condition that they are evolved and with it they change and disappear. This is formulated by Karl Marx in another place thus: "In the social production of their lives, men enter into specific necessary relations, independent of their wills, production relations, which correspond to a certain specific stage in the evolution of their material productive forces. The totality of these production relations constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis over which there arises a legal and political super-structure and to which there correspond specific social forms of consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and mental life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness." ("Critique of Political Economy", quoted by Bukharin in "Historical Materialism").

### 17. Ideology

This super-structure consists of various human organisations, vague non-co-ordinated thoughts and feelings and an "ideology". Generally we find several vague thoughts, ordinary feelings common to a whole society, which may be called social psychology. The social psychology involves two principal elements. First there are general psychological traits found in all classes of a given society, because the situation of those classes may have certain common elements in spite of class differences. For example in the feudal times a common trait is submission to authority, routine and traditional practices; the peasant serf is ruled by the lord, yet, he also has got the same trait and in his turn expects submission from his family. Both enjoy unlimited authority, one on his estate and the other in his family. That trait begins to disappear in the city life of a worker, which breaks the family and consequently the authority of the "head of the family". Hence the psychology of the old men of the countryside conflicts



with that of the younger sons from the city, and in despair they wail "it is the power of Kaliyuga!"

The second element is class psychology which is produced by the aggregate conditions in which the class is stationed, in the economic and socio-political environment. Class psychology assumes very intricate forms and does not many a time lend itself to a direct interpretation through its economic content. It can always be explained by the concrete environment of the specific class. Besides this, there are vocational types of psychology also; viz. that of the lawyers and the jurists. All law and jurisprudence have a solid economic content, yet to a jurist the law appears to be every thing and many a time, a whole lot of them, due to their vocational psychology which shuts them up within the wheels of law and its own logic, develop theories or view points which may conflict seriously with the existing property relations. In such cases the correcting agency of the State steps in and the "rulings" that conflict in such a glaring manner are set aside by legislation.

A systematised class psychology becomes ideology. For example, in the early stages, the workers' discontent against the capitalist order is a vague general dissatisfaction. It is not ideology. Later, however, the vague tendency to have some other system becomes definitely formulated. A set of demands, programme or platform arises, a definite "ideal" begins to appear. Hence, we get an ideology. We often hear of ideological deviations and corrections. Because, as Engels says: "Ideology is simply occupying oneself with thoughts as with independent entities developing independently subject only to their own laws." Naturally a correction of them is to expose their conflict with their fundamental basis—the economic content of their class.

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#### **18. Economy and other factors of social life—their relative importance—the view of the Indian bourgeoisie**

The insistence that is laid so long upon economy does not mean that it is the only true element while all others are vague mists. The theory of historical materialism does not deny the importance

of the superstructure but explains it. It does not consider the various factors of the structure from the point of their unequal value, whether literature is more important than science, or science more than politics. Such a gradation of the relative importance is dangerous. The trigger is as important as the barrel in a rifle. But certainly economy is more important than dancing. But we reject considering the scales of importance of these 'factors'. They are not independent factors as such at all, but the whole is a synthesis, all the elements being necessary to maintain the equilibrium and continuity of society; at the same time all these elements are conditioned by the material productive forces of society.

It has become necessary here to show that the fundamental basis of all society is its economic structure, because in India today, in the political and cultural movements, the champions of those movements consider that their particular movement is conditioned by the causation of its own ideological system and it is unconnected with any other basis. As already pointed out this is always the case when people try to deal only with the super-structure and do not know the real basis. For example, the liberal bourgeoisie in India says: "It would accept everything that is best in British culture". The petty-bourgeoisie revolts and says that India has her own culture and we shall have nothing from the British culture. Such statements come from two purely isolated fights between two ideological schools. But as we have seen above these attitudes follow necessarily from the production relations of the class to which the contending sections belong in the production forces of Indian society. The liberal bourgeoisie being completely interlocked, in Industry, Banking, Government posts etc., with the British bourgeoisie, it has made its own the British culture, which in its turn is the culture of the industrial bourgeoisie. But the case with the Indian petty-bourgeoisie is different. It is not yet organically fused with the liberal bourgeoisie. It still depends on petty trading of village products, on petty farming rents which are threatened by the British expropriators. A large section is still governed in its life more by the customs and laws of Manu than the ideology of Mill and

Bentham. A section of it, drawn from the families of the feudal landholders, expects to see the return of the "old glorious times". Therefore, it thinks India has a special culture, which means a specific type of feudal culture, which is not yet completely destroyed because its basis the feudal productive forces are yet dominant to a large extent.

Not knowing historical materialism of Marx, the scholars of the Indian bourgeoisie run hither and thither to explain these "special cultures" and "special messages" of India. The various "popular parties," not based on the scientific historical materialism of Marx, are easily deluded into thinking that the ills of India can be cured by simple readjustment in the superstructure of the State, law etc. Even a great scientist like Sir C. V. Raman proposed that if Government were to give him ten lakhs of rupees to establish experimental laboratories for research and training in industrial chemistry, the ills of India's industry would be cured. This was a glaring example of Engels' definition of ideology as being simply "the occupying oneself with thoughts as with independent entities developing independently subject only to their own laws." The expert forgot that industrial chemistry does not arise unless there is first a modicum of industry as a basis for it, unless there is a certain accumulation of capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the State power is in harmony with the development of the productive forces of the country.

The thorough grasp of historical materialism is, therefore, absolutely necessary to show that the present clashes in politics, in culture, in education etc. are disturbances in the superstructure of society caused by the disturbance of the equilibrium in the productive forces and production relations of the classes of our society, some on world scale and some limited to the Indian field. When this is accepted, it naturally follows that the political and cultural warfare is not all in all, and no "compromise" or "understanding" in the field of the superstructure, viz. a conversion of reserved subjects into transferred, a free distribution of the copies of Gita instead of the Bible, appointment of Indian Governors and Legislators instead of the British, will restore the

equilibrium unless there is a readjustment or revolution in the production relations, the property relations of the social classes. Therefore, it is that the statute of the International Workmen's Association, which comprised the vanguard of the Proletariat, says that "The economic emancipation of the working-class is, therefore, the great aim to which every political movement must be subordinated." At the same time it is necessary to give a warning here that this is not to be understood in the sense that the movement in the field of economy alone is important. That leads to the deviation of "Economism" and ultimately "welfare-work-reformism", which neglects the political task of the working-class. The economic emancipation is the fundamental aim. But politics as a means to achieve it is the most important and the first and supreme weapon in the achievement of that aim.

#### **19. Marxism is concerned with changing the basis of economy, not merely the superstructure**

We know from history that revolutions have occurred as recently as 14 years ago, and that revolutionary upheavals have been going on almost in every country of the world since the close of the imperialist world war. What has been the outcome of the victorious revolutions? Firstly, a different political power. Secondly, a different place of classes in the process of production, different distribution of the instruments of production. Why? We know that all the means of human life are procured with the aid of these instruments. Through the long process of history, into the details of which we cannot go here, the distribution of these products takes place according to the distribution of the means of production among the social classes. As the ownership of the means of production is in the hands of the capitalist class or the feudal class, the largest share of the products is appropriated by this class. So long as this accumulation of social necessities into the hands of a class does not become a complete hindrance on further production the discontent of the actual producing class, the workers and peasants, does not take the form of a violent conflict. But so soon as a further development becomes

impossible the conflict breaks out in a violent class war. As the dominating class fortifies its economic powers through the State in the final analysis, the highest form of action of class war is a political revolution, the capture of the State power. "Politics is the concentrated expression of economy", but not every conflict between the productive forces and production relations results in a revolution of this type. Bourgeois writers of history depict every change of a king or constitution as a revolution. Every street rising leading to a displacement of one party by another is called by it a revolution. But that is not the kind of revolution which is aimed at by Communists. A dethronement of the present monarchy by the present Labour Party or the Liberals may not mean a revolution at all so long as the present property relations between, say, the miners and the mine-owners, remain the same. The mere disappearance of King Alfonso from the throne of Spain is not what we might call a revolution. Because it does not alter the relative position of the social classes in production and the consequent appropriation of the products. The working-class continues to produce surplus values for the dominant bourgeoisie. Thus a change in the personnel of the bureaucratic system of the State or the change from monarchy to Republic or from one bourgeoisie to another, since it does not affect the fundamental character of the production relations, is not a revolution. Such changes have their importance in so far as they are attempts to lessen the intensity of the contradictions and bring about a readjustment of the equilibrium within the same socio-economic structure. For example, the Chartist Movement in England threatened a revolution against the bourgeois order, but did not develop into one because the forces of production had not exhausted all their possibilities of growth. The discovery of mines and new regions and a consequent migration of the discontented labour force reduced the pressure of the contradiction; the productive forces developed still further. It was an adjustment within the same socio-economic structure. "The cause of revolutions is the conflict between the productive forces and production relations as solidified in the political organisation of the ruling class. These production relations are so emphatic a

break on the evolution of the productive forces that they simply must be broken up if society is to continue to develop. If they cannot be burst asunder they will prevent and stifle the unfolding of the productive forces and the entire society will become stagnant or retrogressive, that is it will enter upon a period of decay."

The signs of the revolutionary upheaval began to appear first in the ideological change of the oppressed class, which is ripening for a revolution. The ripening of the bourgeois French Revolution first found expression in the philosophers of the revolution, in the new ideas about State, Democracy, Reason etc. The next step was the political seizure of the State apparatus and thirdly, rearrangement of economy. The feudal barons were destroyed and the bourgeoisie controlled the State, developing the productive forces on capitalist lines whose growth was hindered by the feudal order, by its thithes and taxes tying down the serfs to the land and thus depriving the growing industrial workshops of a free supply of labour.

## 20. Dialectics

This in short is the Marxist method of reading history. This is what is called the materialistic interpretation of history or historical materialism. It should be noted that this is not identical with materialism as popularly understood or misunderstood. This method views society in dialectical motion and not as a static permanent thing. Such a view-point is opposed by the bourgeoisie in the present period though the method of dialectics was evolved in its essence by a bourgeois philosopher, Hegel. It is opposed because the bourgeoisie wants to tell the revolutionary proletariat that a capitalist system is a permanent and immutable State. *Dialectics in essence is revolutionary, as it measures progress by the development of contradictions, resulting in a higher form of motion. It views, when applied to history, the feudal order as a higher form than the primitive one; the bourgeois economy or social order as a higher form than the feudal whose contradiction it is. But the bourgeoisie wants to stop here, while the Marxists proceed and state that the same*

dialectical motion of society shows that the socialist order is a higher form than the bourgeois and the highest because it will have no class contradictions at all. Historical materialism is this law as applied to social growth and explains the past and enlightens and moulds the future.

**21. Causes of the conquest of India as given by the Maratha historians—they are not causes but the description of symptoms and after-effects**

The history of the conquest of India by the British bourgeoisie is represented in many fantastic colours by the historians, whether of the Indian bourgeoisie or the British. Prominent writers like Mr. N. C. Kelkar and Mr. V. V. Khare attribute the failure of the Indians (and the Marathas especially, because it was with them that the last decisive fights were waged by the invaders) to put up a proper resistance mainly to the following causes:—

1. General absence of the feeling of nationalism.
2. Absence of a habit of co-operative working.
3. Absence of an institutional life, with its accompaniment of elective principles.
4. Absence of superior weapons of war.

Mr. Rajwade, the most brilliant research scholar of Indian and Hindu history and of sociology in one of his articles finds the cause of British victory in the superior weapons of war of the British. British historians very rarely speak seriously of the whole thing and say that the British won because the Indians lost! But both sets of reasons are shallow and unable to explain why the Indians had not those four attributes in the same period in which the British had them. Others would not like to admit the first three reasons but would content themselves by saying that it was a huge military bungle on the part of Indians

We say that all these reasons are merely symptoms, a description of the superstructure of the social groups in India of that time, but do not explain anything. The conquest of India by Britain was a conquest of Indian feudalism by the forces of the British bourgeoisie, and it was an inevitable happening because

everywhere the feudal order has always succumbed before the new superior order of bourgeois industry. The four reasons shown above are not characteristic of India as such but generally of all feudal systems, because they are the outcome of feudal economy. The characteristics of feudal economy are that production is carried on in isolated scattered farms by a peasantry, which is personally bound to the feudal lords, who appropriate the whole surplus produce, according as they like. Production of other necessities is carried on on small scale in homes or small workshops with handicraft tools, and as the productivity of labour is not great, very little of market relations prevail. A hereditary bureaucracy, stagnant life, wealth and ease for the dominant class and complete subjection including personal subjection of the vast peasantry, isolated production, such are a few of the characteristics. Isolated handicraft production is quite the reverse of modern factory production, which is based on a co-operative principle, i.e. each process in production (and naturally the worker) depending on another process. There is an active exchange of goods on the market in bourgeois economy which is lacking in the feudal. There is absence of a contact in the latter. Hence, the absence of any active feeling of "nationalism". Nationalism is a bye-product of the bourgeois structure of economy. Constitutional working is also a product of the new productive forces. The new technology requires the pooling of capital of millions of persons, which necessarily introduces a constitutional working and is incompatible with absolute autocracy and the purely personal power of the feudal nobility.

Lastly, we come to the weapons of war. The weapons used by the British were, in the later period, used by the Indian feudal nobility also when it came in contact with the French and British armies. There is evidence of a gun factory at Agra and of ordnance batteries in the Maratha armies, but where was the basis of production of the technique that would supply them continuously? It requires a certain amount of iron and steel industry, of the requisite fuel supply which can develop only in conditions where the means of production have advanced to a



stage of swift turnover, with an economical expenditure of energy with the aid of advanced instruments. In the absence of steel and mining industries the Indian army could not be equipped with a continuous supply of weapons used by their opponents. A technology that imports steel for its swords from Turkey could not be expected to produce a continuous supply of a phalanx of batteries.

**22. Why Indian peasantry first fought against Moghal feudalism and then became cold-class oppression restored by their Maratha feudal leaders**

Moreover, the Indian peasantry was not interested in fighting for its feudal nobility and nowhere has the peasantry done so. There is a class contradiction between the feudal class and the peasantry. As producers on the soil they create wealth which is appropriated by the feudal lords because they own the means of production—the land—and have fortified their power through the State and the clergy. The class war of the peasantry in Europe was fought in many a peasant war, one of which has been brilliantly studied and depicted by Engels in his "Peasant War in Germany" (Exh. P. 1183—D 407). In the ancient history of every country there are records of attempts of the oppressed class to end the unequal division of wealth. In India one of the biggest upheavals of this kind was, in my opinion, the Buddhist Revolution. But in the latest period of feudal India, the flaring up of an unmixed class war was to a certain extent prevented by the invasions of Muslim feudalism. The Hindu feudal lords succeeded in working up the religious feelings of the peasantry, which was led to believe that a fight with those invaders would improve their condition. The class-struggle was canalised into a religious struggle, which in fact was a struggle between two feudal groups, each of which exploited its own peasantry for its own class interests. But after each such struggle, the peasantry found that its condition remained just the same. The great revolt of the peasantry, which had intensified during the twelve years' famine of the fourteenth century, and which at last took the form of a religious movement of reformation under the leadership

of the "saints", who had been harassed by the theological hierarchy or were ruined petty merchants of the city (like Tukaram), was also canalised into an important wailing against stone walls or a fight against the Mohammedan barons. Still it retained its peasant character till the organised risings and successes of Shivaji. The forces of this popular hero of the present nationalists and Hindus of the Deccan were mostly led by the rank-and-file peasants, which left its traces on the administration also. One of the most significant characteristics of this was the attempt made to discontinue hereditary services and grants of land. But after the successes, when the old feudal element entered his forces, the movement deteriorated. In the Third Reign, when the leaders of the rank-and-file peasants who had fought were themselves created feudal lords and hereditary grants of land etc. were introduced, the peasantry became again apathetic. The same old stagnant life, galvanised into activity only where famine lashed it into invasions, the same old surrender of wealth to the parasitic class was restored. The ideological discontent could not mature in any class demand, aiming at a change in the distribution of the means of production, because no new forms of economy had been generated within the womb of the old. The ideology and political superstructure had to conform to the productive forces, the technology of their time. There was no new invention, no advance in technology; therefore, the repetition of the old production relation, or reproduction of the old contradictions and stagnation could be the only result, though accompanied by a little shifting of some groups but always within the same socio-economic structure.

### **23. The work of the British bourgeoisie—overthrow of feudalism**

It was quite a different case with the British at this time. When the Moghul feudal nobility was invading India, the German peasantry had fought out an unsuccessful class war with its nobility, which was helped in the ruthless suppression of the peasantry by the traitor Martin Luther, who in history is painted

as a saint of a reformed religion but in reality was the leader and exponent of the ideology of the new mercantile bourgeoisie. When Jehangir was trying to speed up feudal justice by a chain of golden bells (a fine symbol for Justice indeed!), the British bourgeoisie had fought out one revolution and beheaded its feudal king, thus removing the feudal fetters on its economic development in the towns. By a series of historical and natural circumstances, Europe had moved out a bit and had possessed the mobile gold and silver resources of America, which were profitably turned into mercantile Capital, expanding production, and creating new instruments of production etc. When the two warring feudal groups in India were entering a peace pact and partnership guaranteeing their respective rights and share of exploitation of the peasantry, the British mercantile bourgeoisie, though weak, was forging ahead and assuming the new capitalist form of a Company. Feudal India was being opposed, not by a feudal king, but by the East India Company. That alone sums up the relative position of both in the development of the productive forces. The new productive forces ripened within the womb of feudal economy, but the production relations, the property relations, which were in favour of and under the control of feudal nobility, would not allow them to grow unless they yielded the surplus product to them just as they appropriated the surplus values produced by the serfs. For example, one bale of cotton to pass from the field of one noble where it was produced to the workshop in the town, if the states of twenty nobles intervened, had to pay twenty tolls which naturally hindered the growth of production and led to conflicts. Those fetters were removed by the overthrow of feudal power by the bourgeoisie, with the help of the peasantry which also was the enemy of feudalism. When we were here forming confederacies of barons, Britain had carried out the two bourgeois revolutions of 1648 and 1689 which curtailed the power of the landowning bourgeoisie and France had carried out a thorough destruction of all relics of the old order in the prolonged and ruthless revolutionary struggle of 1789-93.

**24. The bourgeois revolution of 1793—the role of the peasantry**

School textbooks of the bourgeoisie in all countries suppress the revolutionary role of the peasantry in these revolutions and their subsequent betrayal by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois revolutions of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries were the joint attacks of the peasantry and the town petty-bourgeoisie against the feudal order, under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. The peasantry had tried single-handed to rise against feudalism but had been mowed down by the nobility whose rights and unlimited privileges over the peasant serf, including his wife and daughters, were threatened. The peasantry was incapable alone to lead the struggle because it was under the influence of the clergy which was an ally of the nobility; it was isolated and scattered and therefore, could not make concerted attacks like the nobility; its demands were not consciously revolutionary. They only asked for less exploitation and not abolition of exploitation. There was no considerable town proletariat to give them a lead. With the rise of the bourgeoisie the position changed. The feudal fetters on bourgeois production had to be broken, but alone the bourgeoisie was not capable of accomplishing this. It allied itself with the peasantry. The greatest and most thorough bourgeois revolution was that of 1793. All the literature on which we are fed by the bourgeoisie about this period paints it as the struggle for the splendid ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, propounded by the French philosophers. But these are merely the ideological expressions of the real conflict of the bourgeois productive forces against the feudal production relations, which kept the bourgeois forces under "fetters, inequality and class untouchability." Bourgeois historians also suppress the role of the peasantry, which has been brought to light by the Marxist writers in its true significance. I shall give only a short picture of the part played by the peasantry.

The revolutionary action of the peasantry commenced in the beginning of 1789 when France was only just making preparations for the Election of the States General. Already at that time the peasants had refused to carry out various services

imposed upon them by the landlords. The movement grew still larger in the summer of 1789. The vanguard of the movement was the village Poir. The peasantry formed detachments with whatever weapons came to hand, marched to the castles of the nobles and demanded the surrender of all the deeds and documents upon which the feudal landlords based their claims to exploit the peasantry. If these documents were handed over they were immediately burnt. If the landlord refused the peasants attacked the castle and burnt it to the ground, sometimes massacring the owners. According to the historian Taine, during the four months preceding the capture of the Bastille, there were four hundred peasant outbreaks of this kind. While the bourgeoisie was opposed to feudal property, it was a fanatical worshipper of its own property; but feudal property is also a form of private property and had it become the fashion to treat feudal property with disrespect, the danger would have arisen of bourgeois property being treated with the same disrespect later on. For that reason the bourgeoisie were displeased at first with the revolutionary conduct of the peasantry (just as the Indian Congress is here displeased). The Deputies of the National Assembly began to complain: "Property of every kind is being subjected to most outrageous plunder. Everywhere castles are being burnt down, monasteries are being destroyed, estates are being plundered. The law is powerless, the authority of the courts no longer exists." Hence a section of the National Assembly proposed that these acts of violence be condemned and the peasants should be told that this kind of conduct was against the law and they must wait patiently for what the National Assembly would do for them (almost the appeals issued by the Congress in India asking the united Provinces peasantry to wait patiently for the Round Table Conference and abide by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact!).

But the peasant movement developed so rapidly that it was hopeless to believe that it could be stemmed with promises. Moreover, the bourgeoisie dared not repel the peasantry (unlike that in India) and the revolutionary conduct of the peasantry forced the landlords to make some concessions. On August 11,

1789, the National Assembly abolished feudal regulations. But it would not abolish feudal rights. For that they wanted compensation. This did not satisfy the peasantry. Then the Constituent Assembly again took up the question and tried some reforms, which kept in a large measure the rights of the aristocratic landowners. They fixed the compensation at 2½ billion francs. The peasants of the Department of the Loire-Et-Garonne wrote to the Assembly "You proclaimed the abolition of the feudal regime, but in fact you have done the very opposite, for we shall always have to call those to whom we have hitherto rendered service, our seigneurs, for we shall never be able to pay the compensation you have fixed." The peasant revolt became more intense and the nobility also refused to make any concessions to the bourgeoisie. The result was that the Assembly confiscated property of the Emigre aristocrats, which was also a half-hearted measure. Only when power at last passed into the hand of the real revolutionary petty-bourgeois Jacobin Party did the Convention repeal the half-hearted measures of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies. On July 17, 1793, the Convention abolished all feudal rights and services. A decree on June 10th, restored all the common lands to the peasantry and permitted them to be distributed, which was in the interests of the small and middle peasants.

The characteristic feature of whole course of the Great French Revolution was that in its fight against the nobility and the survivals of feudalism, the bourgeoisie succeeded in rallying the masses of the peasantry, the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the rising proletariat. The bourgeoisie succeeded in taking the lead, in securing the hegemony of the revolutionary movement and directing it in accordance with its own interests. Very unwillingly and only under pressure did the bourgeoisie, make any concessions to the peasantry. It directed the revolution along the path that corresponded to its interests and turned all the gains of the revolution in its own favour. It was only the prolonged character of the revolution that permitted the peasantry to display its revolutionary energy, deliver heavy blows against its old enemy, the big aristocratic landowners, and convert France into a country of small proprietors.

The mighty campaigns of Napoleon rested on the peasantry as the basis of the armies, and the new bourgeois economy and technique supplied the heavy artillery. Napoleon was the genius of the bourgeoisie working with the strength of the revolutionary peasantry, whose newly-won lands were in danger, if the expelled feudalism were to succeed in restoring its rule. (Reference P. 1186)

In Germany and Austria the situation was the worst. In these countries the revolution of 1848, owing to their relatively short duration, did not give the peasantry the opportunity to exert that pressure which was done by the French peasantry in 1789. Though some of the feudal relations were swept away, the land-owners succeeded in retaining many of their privileges and large estates even till 1918. And when during the world war, the German bourgeoisie called on these interests to make sacrifices, they refused. The cleavage was one of the reasons of the failure of German-Austrian Imperialism, against the Allied Imperialism which was not suffering from such a drawback. Thus in all the three bourgeois revolutions the peasantry comprised the fighting armies and it is the peasant class which became ruined after the success of these revolutions, as an inevitable economic consequence of the victory. One hundred years after the victory of Cromwell the British Yeomen had completely disappeared, although it was due entirely to the intervention of the Yeomen and the plebeian elements of the towns that final victory was won and Charles I brought to the scaffold. The result of the revolutionary struggle of the peasantry allied with the bourgeoisie was the victory of the bourgeoisie—the establishment of the domination of Capital in place of the domination of feudalism.

An excellent study of the ideological expression of the bourgeois revolutions, the projecting of bourgeois production needs into the domain of the religious and philosophical field, can be found in Engels' "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," and "Feurbach" which are available in English translations.

After the overthrow of the feudal regime, the peasantry took to peaceful farming. The appropriation of the whole of its surplus by

the nobility being removed for a time, it was allowed to improve its position. The bourgeoisie took to capitalist manufacture on an expanding scale with the basis of the new peasant proprietors as their home market. During the 19th century, the burnt of exploitation fell on the working-class and whenever it tried to rise against the bourgeoisie it was either not supported by the peasantry or actively opposed by it, because it was through the bourgeoisie that the peasantry had received its lands and emancipation from feudal oppression.

## **25. Productive forces developed and changed society but did not abolish classes—crises begin**

The development of productive forces under the new production relations was helped by the inventions of the 18th and 19th centuries. These inventions increased the productivity of labour, that is it also increased the surplus values yielded by them. For example, if with the old means of production, a worker in a guildshop or cottage produced a hundred units of a useful product and received 80 units back as the necessary minimum for the replacement of his exerted labour power, the worker with the new means of production produced one thousand units in the same time and received 80 or 100 units back—thus leaving 900 units surplus to the owner of the means of production, whereas before he could leave only 20. The rate of surplus value, that is the rate of exploitation, increased, leading to a rapid accumulation of wealth in the hands of the bourgeoisie, which centralised and concentrated it leading to even more expansion of production of commodities. When the production of commodities expanded beyond the capacity of home markets, the export of manufactured goods began and with it was felt the necessity of foreign markets and colonies. It is to these mighty efficient expanding claws of the productive forces of bourgeois economy, bourgeois interests, that Indian feudalism and peasantry fell a victim. It became a "colony," a market. The iron forges of the British bourgeoisie had seized the golden bells of Indian feudalism and converted them into a mobile gold currency for its commodity circulation. Marx in his Manifesto summarises the results thus:



"We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word the feudal relations of property, became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they were so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder. In their place stepped free competition accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it and by the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class. (Exh. P. 21)

The change, however, had not abolished classes nor emancipated the whole society. One species of class society was replaced by another. The bourgeoisie which had been revolutionary against feudalism ceased to be so and considered its rule as final and permanent. It formulated its position in the slogan, "Whatever is, has reason to be", but refused to see the further implication that "Whatever is exists so long as it is necessary". The bourgeois property relations and order have reason to be so long as it is necessary to develop the productive forces of society. But so soon as it will become a hindrance like its predecessor it will have to vanish. Capitalist social order is no more free from the law of dialectical development than was the feudal order. Only the manifestation of its contradiction would be different according to the different productive forces. The bourgeois intelligentsia tried to hide this. Though dialectics in the modern form was formulated by the bourgeois philosopher, Hegel and applied by the bourgeoisie in its other scientific achievements, yet its concrete application to social development, the bourgeoisie opposed vehemently, because it meant admission of its eventual overthrow by its contradiction—the Proletariat.

This was thoroughly exposed by Marx. Even before the bourgeoisie had scarcely established itself in a few countries, its contradictions began to appear; the conflict of its productive forces and production relations began to appear in their most glaring form, the periodical epidemic of overproduction.

Says Marx: "A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises the great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that in all earlier epochs would have seemed an absurdity, the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself to be back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property. On the contrary they become too powerful for these conditions by which they are fettered and so soon as they overcome these fetters they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endangering the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by the enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other by the conquest of new markets. And by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises and by diminishing the means whereby crises are lessened".

## **26. Development of British Capitalism—expansion of colonies—Capitalism becomes Imperialism**

Crises of overproduction, the disparity between production and consumption began as early as 1830 and 1840 and were responsible not in a small measure for the Corn law agitation in England, the Chartist Movement and the revolutionary upheavals of 1848. As soon as there was a crisis, the low grade concerns collapsed the stronger ones beat them, production was centralised, costs reduced by a number of ways and a further impetus to trade was given. When such centralisation resulted in unemployment, it was very soon absorbed by the expanding production or the pressure was drained off by emigration. In the development of capitalist production England was ahead as it had accomplished its bourgeois revolution far earlier, almost a century, than the continental countries. This was in some measure due to the weakness of its feudal nobility which was exhausted by a long war of the White and Red Roses. That is why the British bourgeoisie has the largest reserves, has been the first imperialist power, has been the stock exchange and money market of the whole world and the largest colonial power. The development of the production of the means of production (production of heavy machinery etc.) is a sure index of the growth of industrial Capitalism. That England was forging ahead was seen in her iron output which was:

16 Mil. Tons in the period 1831-41

18 Mil. Tons in the period 1841-50

32.5 Mil. Tons in the period 1851-60

Whereas in her neighbouring countries it was the export of British Steel and Capital that built their first railways. Britain had 49 million tons of coal production in 1850 which jumped up to 82 millions in 1860. Her export of goods of 70 million pounds in 1850 was 164 in 1860, i.e. it had more than doubled. The pressure of population, of ruined artisans and of unemployment was drained into emigration. The discovery of mines in

California took away 250,000 men. From 1830 to 1850 there was a steady stream of emigration of about two million persons. The other countries also followed but very late. They had to deal with their feudal fetters.

Crises of overproduction occurred every ten or twelve years or sometimes less. In the 19th century as shown above by Marx these were overcome by conquest of new markets and a more thorough exploitation of old. This is reflected in the colonial expansion of the big industrial powers of the world. Lenin quoting an American writer sets it out thus:—

### *Colonial Possessions*

Britain (Millions)			France (Millions)		Germany (Millions)	
Sq. Miles	Popula- tion		Sq. Miles	Popula- tion	Sq. Miles	Popula- tion
1815-30	—	126.4	0.02	0.5	—	—
1860	2.5	145.1	0.2	3.4	—	—
1880	7.7	267.9	0.7	7.5	—	—
1889	9.3	309.0	3.7	56.4	1.0	14.7

For Britain the period of vast colonial conquests is between 1860 and 1880 and also the last 20 years. For France and Germany, the growth was mainly or entirely in the last 20 years of the 19th century. This was not an isolated development, due to the caprice of adventurers and heroes, as the bourgeois historians would like us to believe (though we acknowledge the fact that individual qualities did play a part in it). The expansion was thoroughly correlated with the new development of the productive forces. Each crisis of overproduction was leading to what Marx called concentration and centralisation of Capital, leading ultimately to the monopoly form of Capitalism, represented by international cartels in the economic field and a fierce race for colonies by the respective States of the competing bourgeoisie, in the political field. The crisis of 1847 and 1860 which had their repercussions on Franco-Italian politics and also the Russian feudal nobility, which had to consent in some measure to the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. After this Lenin

marks off the periods in the development of the old Capitalism based on the entrepreneur into that of the monopoly stage based on the almost hidden, impersonal and uncanny power of "Finance-Capital", thus:

(1) 1860-70, the highest and final stage of the development of free competition, the beginnings of monopoly may just be discerned.

(2) After the crisis of 1873, a period of wide development of cartels, still unusual and transitory; they constitute a transient phenomenon.

(3) The boom period at the end of the 19th century and the crisis of 1900-3, cartels become one of the basic features of economic activity. Capitalism has become Imperialism.

## **27. Meaning of Imperialism—its five qualities**

The aim of Communists is the overthrow of Imperialism and Capitalism, and the immediate aim of the Communists in India is the overthrow of British Imperialism. (Exh. P. 2339) It appears that many people misunderstand what we mean by Imperialism. Some think it means the rule of the Emperor and therefore think that only monarchies are Imperialisms. What we really mean is a certain type of capitalist economy with its political accompaniment. The description of this type is authoritatively given by Lenin thus: "Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of essential qualities of Capitalism in general. But Capitalism became capitalist Imperialism at a definite and a very high stage of its development, when certain of its essential qualities began to be transformed into their opposites, when the features of a period of transition from Capitalism to a higher social and economic structure began to take shape and be revealed all along the line, the feature that is economically essential in this process is the substitution of capitalist monopoly for capitalist free competition. Free competition is the fundamental quality of Capitalism and of commodity production generally. Monopoly is exactly the opposite of free competition but we have seen this latter beginning to be transformed into monopoly beneath our very eyes, creating big industry and

eliminating small, replacing big industry by still bigger industry, finally leading to such a concentration of production and capital that monopoly has been and is the result; cartels and combines and trusts are fusing with them the power of a dozen or so banks manipulating thousands of millions. At the same time monopoly that has arisen from free competition does not drive the latter out of existence, but co-exists over it and with it, thus giving rise to a number of very acute and very great contradictions, antagonisms and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from Capitalism to a more highly developed order".

The above economic features are well-known to the Indian bourgeoisie in the tremendous power wielded for example by the Swedish Match Trust, the Oil Syndicates etc. The five essential features of Monopoly Capitalism or Imperialism are:

(1) The concentration of production and capital, developed so highly that it creates monopoly, which plays a decisive role in economic life.

(2) The fusion of banking capital with industrial and the creation on the basis of this finance capital, a financial oligarchy

(3) Export of Capital which has become extremely important as distinguished from the export of commodities.

(4) The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share out the world amongst themselves.

(5) The territorial partition of the whole earth completed by the greatest capitalist powers.

It is this economic and political structure we want to overthrow and replace by still higher form; the socialist structure, whose forces have ripened already within the womb of monopoly capital. The imperialist stage of Capitalism is a stage of decay, because the contradiction of productive forces and property relations, have now no room left to mitigate their intensity. The disparity between consumption and production and the crisis of overproduction formerly led to colonial expansion, export of goods, either consumption goods or capital goods. Expansion led to a still further increase in production and development of technique. But this process had come to its last point by 1914, because by that time the whole world had been completely

partitioned. In the absence of new regions the only way was to redistribute the old regions over again, forcibly destroy the means of production and begin the cycle again. This in other words meant forcible seizure of the territories of one Imperialism by another and the destruction of productive forces of one bourgeoisie by another—in short a world war. We got one in 1914, when the world stood partitioned amongst the six Imperialist Powers, who fought the war, or rather made their working-class and peasantry fight it for them.

For the pre-war period details of the formation of international cartels in the most important industries like Iron, Steel, Electricity, Oil etc. and the banks behind them, the consequent export of Capital, the partition of the world amongst the various Imperialist Powers and the impending world war as the only solution that Imperialism would attempt, can be found in the most learned work of Lenin entitled "Imperialism—the last stage of Monopoly Capitalism".

## **28. Imperialist wars—a necessity, not a policy—results of last War—decline of Britain**

Imperialist wars are thus not dependent on the murder of a prince or the will of a military genius. Neither they can be scrapped simply because some well-intentioned polished saints want peace and love in the world. They could not be scrapped by the scrapping of a few old ships and the reduction of a few battalions. War is not a policy with Imperialism but a necessity, which arises from the increasing productive forces and the inability of Imperialism to dispose of them because they are to be disposed of on the condition that they yield profits—which however are not obtainable within the markets of the same Imperialism. One Imperialism has naturally to invade the markets of the other, destroy the productive forces of the competing Imperialism and thus try to insure the return of its own profits. That is Imperialist war. Armaments are merely weapons, not foundations of Imperialism. Militarism and wars are superstructural attributes raised on the fundamental contradiction between the worldwide productive forces developed by society and the appropriation of their products by the imperialist bourgeoisie to the exclusion of three-fourths of society. Unless

this is abolished, Disarmament Conferences are merely smoke-screens for the preparation of more armaments.

The imperialist bourgeoisie of the belligerent powers assembled the resources of the whole world in their war of graft and plunder, a war designed to destroy the productive powers that create useful values for society and not a war to increase the sum total of useful values for the benefit of society from nature. The war was unprecedented in its dimensions, in its destruction, because the growth of human powers was unprecedented. There never was a world society before like this, interlinked in all its parts by the swiftest means of transport and maintaining complete contact through the vast apparatus of capitalist markets. Not one country, not the smallest corner of the globe was left untouched directly or indirectly by the operations of the Imperialist War. During the four years, 1914-18, the mobilised population was 70 millions, out of which 9 millions were killed, 19 millions were wounded and 4 millions permanently disabled. The most gigantic apparatuses of destruction were being produced daily. Five million workers in Great Britain, U.S.A. and France alone were engaged in the manufacture of war material. The British and French bourgeoisie were sinking millions of their accumulated wealth, robbed from the peasantry and workers, solely to blow up men, women and childr of human beings, but to manufacture guns and amunitions, to blow up their skulls. The two countries alone put up on the field 48,000 guns, 112,000 machine guns, 106,000 planes and 6018 tanks. In the report made to the Third World Congress of the Communist International, July 1921, it was shown that at the time of the war, the national wealth of the warring nations was 2,400 milliard gold marks; of which 1200 milliard was destroyed during the war. In addition the yearly decrease in production was 100 milliards. So that after the war the wealth remaining was 800 milliard gold marks. The bourgeoisie was trying to overcome its crisis by "the enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces" Marx had said in 1847 (References Exh. P. 2491).

Did the imperialist slaughter and the destruction of productive forces cure Imperialism of crisis and contradictions? Did the war result in a better world, living in peace and contentment, "self determining" its life with the vast amount of good things, that it



had powers to produce from nature? No—. As a result of the war a repartition of the globe took place amongst the victorious Imperialisms. But that did not cure Capitalism of crises and conflicts. The wiping out of Central European competition did not improve the position of Allied Capital. On the contrary the oldest Capitalism of the world, that of Great Britain, was outstripped by American Imperialism; in fact the whole of the bond-holding States of Europe, the money-lenders and financiers of the world, fell in bondage to American Finance. At the end of the war American Finance was a creditor to the Allies for 11,872 million dollars to be paid by annual instalments over 62 years. Sir Charles Hobhouse in an article in the July number of the "Contemporary Review" gives figures which show the immensity of European indebtedness to the United States and the vast amount which Germany has to pay to the victorious powers. He writes:

"The capital indebtedness of Europe to America being in round figures, £ 2,250,000,000 it will require a total eventual sum of £ 4,300,000,000 to discharge this obligation. Germany's share of these sums at 66 per cent amounts to £ 1,500,000,000 and £ 3,000,000,000 respectively, only to be obtained at the expense of the foreign trade of her own creditors. These latter in addition owe £ 1,000,000,000 to Great Britain and a trifle of £ 40,000,000 to France. How long can international common sense tolerate the continuance of such illusory assets and debits?"

The crisis became chronic and more accentuated, during which the decline of British Imperialism, the oldest in the world, was brought out in the most vivid colours in the course of the post-war twelve years.

D/- 30-10-31

The second result of the war was the establishment of the Soviet Union, the First Workers' Republic, which had overthrown its Imperialism and, using all the productive forces developed under capitalism, had solved its contradictions by abolishing Capitalism and forcing them to produce things not for profits but for equitable distribution and use of the workers and peasants.

The third result of the war was the increasing strength of the revolutionary movement of the workers and their progress towards an organised attempt to overthrow Capitalism in their own countries.

The fourth result of the war was the rise of the revolutionary movement in the colonies and conquered countries of Imperialism—a movement of national emancipation from parasitic Imperialism and also of Capitalism, in their own countries.

The advance of the new capitalist powers outside Europe is illustrated in their production of goods. United States production of industrial goods increased between 1914 and 1924 from 24 to 43 billion dollars or 78 per cent.; Australian production between 1913 and 1923 from 161 to 348 million pounds or 106 per cent., Canadian in the same period from 1393 to 2781 million dollars or 99 per cent., South African between 1915 and 1920 from 40 to 98 million pounds, Japanese between 1913 and 1919 from 747 to 2,630 million yen. All these increases are considerably in excess of any allowance to be made for reduction to gold values in the case of some countries and of the general increase in world prices (about 50 per cent.). In the same period British industrial production in 1913 values is estimated to have fallen 12 per cent. to 20 per cent. (Lord Weir's estimate) and her export of goods according to the Balfour Committee of 1926 has fallen by 27 per cent. This led to European politics being dominated by Anglo-American rivalry and new groupings of imperialist powers.

## **29. Rationalisation—increase in production—latest crisis**

Immediately after the war Europe and consequently other parts of the world suffered from a crisis of under-production, which was the first of its kind since the rise of Capitalism, which has always given birth to crises of overproduction (vide report of the Third World Congress of the C.I.). The situation in Europe was growing revolutionary and the proletariat attempted the revolutionary overthrow of Capitalism in many countries. But they were suppressed, and continental Capitalism started to rebuild itself. The legacy of the war—the burden of reparations and debts hampered the rebuilding. German Imperialism was thoroughly fleeced of the most important colonies, of its iron and coal mines and plants, of its reserve of goods. This threatened a

complete collapse of Germany, while it did not help the Allied Powers much, as their loot was to a great extent drained into America to pay for the war debts. Currencies of every continental country began to fall, famine and bankruptcy stared in the face. Ultimately American Imperialism helped with its war accumulations, the central European powers were put on their feet again on the basis of the Dawes Plan. A partial restoration of production took place. The Dawes Plan brought to Germany 1,750 million dollars of credit, which Germany of course imported in the form of goods. To that extent Germany constituted a good market for U.S.A. and other exporting countries. But when it came to payment of the loans it was bound to take the form of export of goods leading again to a conflict of German goods with those of the victorious bourgeoisie. They were thus confronted with a contradiction again. They must either give up the debts and reparation claims and even convert the Dawes Loan into a gift or consent to receive it in the only form in which it can be paid i.e. export of goods, which are bound to lead to competition with the lending countries. The extent of this competition can be gauged from the fact that Germany has to pay 2,500 million gold marks per year for reparation. The bond holders could not consent to cancel their war bonds and idle incomes nor could they afford to let their industry be engulfed by the incoming goods payment from Germany. But there was no way out—a blind alley of depression and crisis!

However, partial stabilisation was carried out by thorough rationalisation, wage-cuts, suppression of the revolutionary proletariat and application of new technique to industry. The result was that according to the "Financial Times" of 22.1.29 comparative index figure of production for the first eight months of 1928 in the leading countries, on the basis of 1913 as 100, showed that every leading country except Britain had surpassed the pre-war level of production. According to the memorandum of world production and trade issued in June 1930 by the economic section of the League of Nations, the world's production of food stuffs and raw materials increased between 1913 and 1929 by

25 per cent., of food stuffs by 16 per cent. and raw materials by 40 per cent. As regards industrial production the figures given by the League show a further rise except in some cases as follows:

Index of Production.	1913—100	In 1929
	First 8 months—1928 According to "Financial Times" (D. 22.1.29)	According to the Economic Section of the League of Nations
U.S.A.	166	154
France	122	130
Germany	113	122
Western Europe	111	..
Britain	90	112
Sweden	...	127
Poland	...	138
Soviet Russia	...	140

Though in this table the United Kingdom is shown to have gone above the pre-war level it is noteworthy that its percentage of recovery is the last in the rank.

An ordinary man is puzzled to see this vast increase of food stuffs, raw materials and production of industrial goods taking place in the whole world on the one hand and to see unemployment, poverty, retrenchment, reduction of wages, strikes, risings and shootings going on in every country of the world on the other. A crisis of over-production has again overtaken the whole world. There is abundance of everything you want, but it cannot be sold. Prices have fallen but things cannot be sold. There is plenty to sell and millions of men to buy, but things cannot be sold. The capitalists want to sell them, but they cannot be sold. World capitalist economy is in the grip of crisis. The whole world has produced more and more, even gold and silver, but are agreed in saying that there is no money to buy with. It is a deadlock. What are the characteristics of this crisis? Firstly the present is a crisis of over-production. Secondly the crisis is the first *world* economic crisis since the war. It is a world crisis not only in the sense that it

embraces all industrial countries of the world, it is a world crisis also in the sense that the *industrial* crisis has coincided in point of time with an *agricultural* crisis, embracing the production of all forms of raw materials and food stuffs in the principal *agrarian* countries of the world Thirdly though the crisis is general in character, it has developed unequally The industrial crisis began first of all in Poland, Romania and the Balkans It developed there during the whole of 1928 Obvious signs of a commencing agricultural crisis could be seen in Canada, U S A , Argentina, Brazil and Australia by the end of 1928 All this time industry was climbing up in the U S A By the middle of 1929 industrial production in the U S A had achieved almost a record level Only in the second half of 1929 began the turn of the tide, after which there developed a headlong crisis in industrial production which threw back the U S A to the level of 1927 Then came Canada and Japan Then followed bankruptcies in China and India and other colonial countries, where the crisis is aggravated by the fall in the price of silver and where a crisis of over-production is combined with the destruction of peasant economy reduced by feudal exploitation and overwhelming taxes to a state of complete exhaustion The crisis struck the colonial countries and Western Europe with full force in 1930

### **30 Communist view of crisis—fetishism of commodities—contradiction of productive forces and production relations**

We generally hear from all non-Marxist writers, that the phenomenon is due to the absence of purchasing power amongst the masses, i e the consumers of world production But this does not explain where the purchasing power has gone In fact except the parasitic classes, who form a very small minority of the world population, the majority, more than 90 per cent , are producers of these very goods which we see are "over-produced" and are not being sold. If the majority of world population is producing these goods, why has it not the power to consume them? The cause of it lies not in the answer that it has no purchasing power, which means simply begging the question; but in the production

relations, the property relations of capitalist society. The property relations are capitalist relations. It means that all instruments of production, distribution and exchange are owned by the capitalist class. All the land and factories etc. are owned by them. The working-class has to sell its labour power to the capitalist class in order to get a living; and the capitalist class buys its labour power to be used in running the means of production solely on the condition that the whole process yields it a profit. The working-class produces surplus values i.e. more goods than are paid back to it as its wages. This principle also holds in agriculture. In short the result is that if the worker or peasant, with the aid of the means of production, produces say 100 units of goods, he is paid his wages in 30, 20 or even 10 units, which then is his purchasing or consuming power. Even if it is a peasant the same process works in his case, the surplus being taken from him through the means of rent, taxes, interest and the market where he sells his product. Thus every year, the balance of units, after their reckless waste, destruction, and consumption has been allowed for, goes on accumulating, in the form of money, capital, goods etc. in the hands of the bourgeoisie, until, after a period of 10 or 12 years or even less, the capitalist class finds itself in possession of so much surplus goods that it does not know what to do with them. There comes then the crisis of over-production. It is not that suddenly in one year too much production has been done. The crisis mainly comes as the accumulated effect of several years of disparity between the consumption allowed to the working-class and peasantry by the capitalist class and the produce taken from them in return for that. Cannot the working-class and peasantry consume the whole of it? "Consumption has fallen," "there is over-production," does not mean that the masses have been so much overfed that they all have got constipation and therefore cannot consume more. The word "over-production" is a deceptive word. It hides the content of accumulation by a class, the withholding and accumulation of goods in the form of capital, wealth, money, gold and actual goods by a small class of parasites to the exclusion of the masses. The word very successfully transfers the evil arising from this fact of property relations to

some imaginary quality in the commodities themselves, which have suddenly become so mysterious, so naughty, so "sluggish," so "depressed" that they would not move on the market, refuse to be consumed. But this is all nonsense which appears to be sense because Capitalism through its organisation of the exchange market, through the money form in which all exchange is done, hides real content and creates what is called "the fetishism of commodities," which causes a definite *social relation between men* to assume in their eyes the fantastic form of a *relation between things*. There is no "over-production" as such in relation to the physiological needs or consuming power of the world's population. The world can consume not only what is produced, but even more, if all the productive forces of society were to be used to the full extent. Things are not exchanged, are not sold because this capitalist class wants its tribute, the surplus, the profit locked in them. In other words it is not "profitable to sell," "the prices are ruinous" to the bourgeoisie. In the meantime further production is curtailed, retrenchment and rationalisation are undertaken, wages and salaries are reduced. What does it mean? It means more people are deprived of their power to consume goods which intensifies the crisis. When Capitalism was ascending i.e. there were people still left to approach and tell them to take the goods in exchange for theirs, these periodical crises were overcome. Formerly when there were retrenchments or cuts of wages and rationalisation, when the reduced cost had yielded more surplus to the bourgeoisie, the men so thrown out were absorbed in new factories and on new lands. In the imperialist stage there are no new lands left, productive forces have developed so much, technique is so advanced, monopoly so widely organised on world scale that there is no "absolute" increase in employment in several countries. There is a chronic or permanent unemployment of millions, a chronic going down of consumption, a chronic crisis, which becomes accentuated at even shorter intervals than before on world scale and in fact never vanishes from the world as a whole at any single point of time.

The intellectual agents of the bourgeoisie hide this simplest of all propositions, the contradiction between productive forces and

production or property relations, which are the cause of the whole capitalist muddle in all sorts of mystifying talk of the "eternal" law of supply and demand, of the "scarcity" of money, of disparity of gold distribution, and such other things. Now all these mystifying complications arise from the capitalist relations and defy solution and understanding so long as the fundamental proposition of the appropriation of surplus value created by the toilers is not grasped. This situation is described in practically identical terms by all the leading spokesmen of Capitalism. The British President of the Board of Trade declared in 1925, "every country has far greater industrial capacity than before but in a far poorer world." (Sir P. Cunliffe Lister, House of Commons, 6/7/25). He was echoed by the German Chancellor, Luther, addressing the German Annual Trade and Industrial Congress in 1926: "It is a phenomenon of the war and the post-war period that the total productive capacity of the world has risen far above the demand." (London Times 29/4/26). In November 1926, the German industrialist, Felix Deutch, estimated the world's industrial capacity at 40-50 per cent. higher than before the war; but actual production was only just approaching the pre-war level at that time. If this phenomenon is not considered from the revolutionary class point of view of Marxism one would be lost in confusion to find 50 per cent higher capacity to produce the good things of life and yet "a far poorer world." In fact the world is not poorer, it is the working-class and peasantry, the real producers and main consumers that are poorer.

### **31. Monopoly of wealth, cause of crisis—monopoly in Britain, U.S.A. and France—share of wages in national incomes**

The sole monopoly of the increasing wealth and capacity to buy and consume is held by the bourgeoisie, which can be definitely proved in the figures of the increasing accumulation of wealth by the capitalist class and the loss of wages and falling shares of the working-class and peasantry in the national produce, in all the countries including those which are supposed to be prosperous. The British workers lost to the extent of 5,000 million pounds by



aggregate wage reduction between 1921-26. This fall is not covered by the fall in the cost of living. In the same period the profits of industrial companies as shown by the figures in the "Economist" rose year by year, the average dividend on ordinary shares being:

1922	...	8.4%
1923	...	9.3%
1924	...	9.8%
1925	...	10.3%
1926	...	11.3%

Moreover the return on all capital bearings, on fixed interest like Government loans, debentures, royalties etc. increased by the return to gold standard, which increased the value of the pound. The Labour Research Department estimated that between 1900-1925 the real income of the working-class in England has gone down by 20 per cent. An article in the "Daily Herald" of London by Mr. F. Brockway which was reproduced in the Indian press in May 1931 discusses the latest official figures on this question. During the past ten years according to Mr. Graham, President of the Board of Trade, the annual income of the workers has fallen by 700 million pounds. Mr. Graham supplemented his statement about wage reductions by pointing out that during the same ten years the national income has not fallen. It has remained stable at 4,000 million pounds a year. But Mr. J. M. Keynes says that the national income is actually increasing at the rate of 100 million pounds a year. The average dividend for 24,000 typical limited liability companies was 9.8 per cent. in 1930. Incomes from land increased from £ 300 millions to £ 415 millions since 1922. Since 1920 the interest paid on war loans has increased in real value from £ 300 millions to £ 750 millions per year. In one of the month's at the beginning of 1931 the capital lying idle in one bank alone was £ 360 millions. The latest Inland Revenue Returns for the year ended March 1930 showed that there were 437 millionaires whose income for the year was 49 million pounds. At the same time out of the whole population of 48 millions there were only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million persons chargeable for

Income Tax i.e. having an annual income of £ 135/- which is the exemption limit. Mr. Brockway says: "If the incomes of the working-class are falling and the national incomes are not falling, the incomes of some other section of the nation must be increasing." Yes, the bourgeoisie is increasing its wealth.

It may be said that this is the position in England because it had been involved in a ruinous war and has to compel her workers to share the burden with the bourgeoisie to meet competition and War Debts. But other figures show quite clearly that the process of impoverishment is a pre-war phenomenon also. However take a country like that of U.S.A. which has gained everything by the war. Capitalist propaganda has created an impression in the world that the U.S.A. is the ideal land of prosperity, high wages etc. amongst all the countries in the world. The U.S.A. has the biggest and most highly organised productive forces. With a population which is 7 per cent of the world and with a land area which is 6 per cent of the whole world, it produces 25 per cent of world's wheat, 52 per cent coal, 75 per cent grain, 40 per cent steel and iron, 60 per cent cotton, 40 per cent silver, 20 per cent gold, 72 per cent oil and 85 per cent automobiles. It is completely free from any survivals of feudalism unlike the European countries and has been the home of cartels and trusts. Who commands all this wealth? The Federal Commission Report on Wealth and Income of the United States says that 13 per cent of the population owned 90 per cent of the total wealth in 1926. The aggregate income of all wage-earners including even some of the parasitic services, comprising 63 per cent of the population amounted to 39.5 per cent of the total national income according to Government Statistics of Income for 1924. Between 1890 and 1914 there was no improvement in real wages but actually a fall. If we take into account the rise in real wages between 1914 and 1925 and make allowance for the fall on the previous period, the rise in real wages, comes to 10-14 per cent between 1890 and 1925, while the wealth of the nation increased 263 per cent, exports increased 207 per cent, value of manufactured articles increased 388 per cent and bank clearings 420 per cent. After allowing for the change in money values, the "real wealth" of America increased

between 1900-1924 by 96 per cent while real wages increased by 14 per cent. On the basis of the official figures of the International Labour Office 1926 it is found that in 1925 the average worker's wages was 20-30 per cent below the official subsistence minimum for a family of five. The average wage of industrial workers in 1919 was 1,155 dollars while the minimum necessary "to maintain a family of five at a level of health and decency" was officially computed to be 2,262 dollars. This difference of 51 per cent led to upheavals and consequently slight wage increases, but the difference still remained at 30 per cent and increased in the depression of 1930 when the unemployment figures rose to 8 or 9 millions and the biggest and most prosperous industrial combines announced wages cuts.

Another illusion with regard to America is that her peasantry is rich and is out to beat the whole world in production by scientific methods of agriculture. Here also it should be noted in the first place that monopoly syndicates rob the peasantry by their price policy. The price of agricultural goods in 1926 November was 130 on the basis of 1909-14 as 100 while the non-agricultural products stood at 161. The difference between the two reveals the increasing exploitation of the farmers by the single factor of monopoly price. The farming population which is 26 per cent of the working population receives 13.8 per cent of the national income. For example three million acres of land in the State of Texas were liable to be seized for arrears in interest and debts and were to be sold by auction if payments were not made by 1924. A Government Inquiry in the State of Missouri showed that 28,500 or 9 per cent of its farm estates were vacant as they could not be profitably cultivated. In Canada also, a report says that in the Province of Saskatchewan, the most fertile of all the provinces, the indebtedness of the farmers amounted to 440 dollars per head about the year 1922.

The national wealth of France for 1909-13 was 225,000 million francs divided amongst 11,634,000 persons. But half of this was owned by 98,243 persons, each of whom possessed more than 250,000 francs.

A study of all other countries would reveal the same state of affairs: there is a growing concentration of national wealth in the hands of a small minority of the nation, the capitalist class, while a fraction of the national income is distributed over millions. These few illustrations show that workers' wages are attacked by British Capitalism, which is in a decline, as well as by American Capitalism which was said to be still ascending. It shows that the weaker Imperialism is made to surrender its loot to the stronger through payments of war loans, reparations, Dawes loans etc. And all Imperialisms strong and weak unitedly exploit the working-class and peasantry, national and international. All the productive forces of the world are dominated by the bourgeoisie of the world. Naturally the whole distribution of products is dominated by it. It refuses to produce or distribute the produce except on the principle that it gets back more than what it gives. It has all the ownership of buying power, therefore others cannot buy; it has all the commodities, therefore others cannot consume unless by labour they yield to it more than what they get. The private property relations, the capitalist system, therefore is at the root of the whole trouble. It must be overthrown, if society is to survive and progress, just as the bourgeoisie had overthrown the feudal order and rescued society from stagnation.

**32. Distribution to be socialised—who will carry it out—  
Marxism is the theory of this—six deductions and three results**

Who will carry out this task? Marxism answers this question dialectically. The feudal order produced in its womb is its own contradiction, the bourgeoisie, which overthrew the obsolete class. Marx says: "The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself. But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence, the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working-class—the proletarians."

The productive forces developed in bourgeois society are worked and wielded by the working-class. Even that individual

bourgeois manufacturer who in the initial stage of Capitalism was directly associated with the process and direction of production has vanished, except in small negligible units. He has been replaced by the impersonal power of the banks, by finance capital, which many a time is seldom aware where on the surface of the globe, the forces of production "owned" by it are in fact working. The ownership of things produced is completely divorced from any participation of the owners in the production of things. Production is already socialised on an international scale. The weapons are wielded by the proletariat. What remains to be done is only to socialise distribution, that is destroy the ownership of the means of production, to overthrow the capitalist order based on private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange. This can only be done by the class which actually works the whole apparatus that is the working-class aided by the peasantry. Communism is the revolutionary theory of the working-class which strives to rescue society from the destruction of its productive forces, which would be inevitable if they are allowed to be imprisoned within the stifling envelope of capitalist private property. It is the theory which reorganises society on a higher plane and removes the contradiction and misery from which it is suffering today. Every advanced revolutionary class must have a revolutionary class theory of its own.

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The revolutionary theory of the bourgeoisie, when it was an advanced class as against feudalism, was provided by the bourgeois economists and philosophers of the British and French Revolution and before them it was religiously clothed in the Protestant Reformation. The revolutionary theory of the working-class, which is now revolutionary as against the bourgeoisie, is provided in Marxism-Leninism.

I have sketched in brief the position prevailing in the imperialist countries in general, because the full implications of the Indian situation and the position that Communists adopt cannot be understood without it. The conditions sketched so far will show that the national or bourgeois view-point which pits one

country as a whole against another is misleading. Within each country there are "two nations," one pitted against another. That all the exploiting classes of all countries though competing against one another are united in exploiting the working-class and peasantry. Therefore Communists do not look at an Englishman as an Englishman or a German as a German, but view him from the *class* point of view. We consider the worker Englishman our ally and comrade as against the bourgeois Englishman. Secondly it shows that in spite of the highest development possible under Capitalism the real mass of the population is in no way better off; in spite of the tribute of the whole world pouring into the imperialist countries the working-class and peasantry are still poverty-stricken. That helps us in exploding the illusions prevalent in some of the revolutionary parties in India that a capitalist free India would be a paradise for the masses in whose name they always speak. Thirdly It shows that poverty is not a permanent or unchangeable factor, that wealth grows according to the growth of technology. But its monopoly by one class makes poverty for another compulsory in spite of the increase in wealth. That the solution of the problem of poverty is the solution of the problem of private ownership of the productive forces. Fourthly it shows that social development being a dialectical process, this problem is inevitably solved by the rising class, the Proletariat. Fifthly it shows that the problem is not an isolated one limited to one country, but one affecting world society, which for the first time has come into existence as an effectively interlinked unit in the epoch of Imperialism. Sixthly it shows that having accomplished its fullest possible development, the system is now in decline and awaits being overthrown and superseded by the higher socialist order, for which the productive forces are ready, and also the revolutionary class, which is to use the weapons on the basis of an advanced revolutionary theory. Besides these conditions and deductions there are three more factors which influence and are a guide to the Indian struggle against Imperialism and Capitalism. One is the experiences of the proletariat of the imperialist countries against their bourgeoisie, and the present condition of their class-struggle. The second is the general revolt of colonial

countries against their imperialist oppressors, of which the Indian struggle is a part. And the third is the Soviet Union, the emblem of the victory of the proletariat and the vindication of the correctness of Marxism-Leninism. The essentials of all these factors are all involved in this so-called "conspiracy" as stated in the Public Prosecutor's address. I shall briefly treat the first and the third now and then come to the colonial, specifically the Indian question.

**SECTION 2.—The class-struggle of the proletariat against Capitalism in the period of the 1st and 2nd Internationals: Paras 33-45**

**33. The early Proletarian Movements up to Chartism**

In proportion as the bourgeoisie i.e. Capital is developed, in the same proportion is the Proletariat, the modern working-class developed, a class of labourers who live only so long as they find work and who find work only so long as their labour increases Capital. These labourers, who sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity like every other article of commerce and are consequently exposed to all the fluctuations of the market. The Proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the work people of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade in one locality against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attack not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares, that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union,

but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion and is moreover, yet for a time, able to do so. At this stage therefore the proletarians do not fight their enemies but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie. Modern capitalist industry had its birth in England. Therefore the first struggles of the working-class began in England. The echoes of the French Revolution were not heard amongst the bourgeoisie, which had already received a share in the political power with the fast declining feudal class. Some societies of workmen were founded having sympathy with the revolutionary principles of the French Revolution and aiming at the radical transformation of the British political system. Bread riots broke out in 1790 and the Government fearing a revolutionary movement, transported the radical leaders of Edinburgh (1793), suspended the Habeas Corpus Act (1794), passed a Seditious Meetings Act (1795). In 1797 a mutiny took place at Nellore which led to the prohibition of what we now call the right of free assembly. In 1811 a sect of Luddites started attacking and destroying machinery. In 1819 a large assembly of workers at Peterloo was set upon by the military, and a general massacre like that of the Jallianwala Bagh in India was carried out and the movement suppressed. The repressive Legislation was repealed in 1844, still a great restriction was exercised on the Trade Union Movement.

At the same time the middle-class petty-bourgeoisie had not received the desired share of the political power, which was still dominated by the landowners combined with the big bourgeoisie of that period. The result was, that the petty-bourgeoisie seemingly fought for the workers' rights and the workers' movement was led into the channel of the struggle for Parliamentary vote. The Reform Bill of 1832 gave much to the petty-bourgeois middle-class but nothing to the workers, who then turned to industrial action. Just after the Reform Act there was an industrial crisis, and



the workers forming themselves in Trade Unions, established the Grand National Consolidated Trade Unions (1834) and planned a General Strike. The employers attacked the workers before the strike could come about by involving them in sectional disputes. The aid of bourgeois law was invoked and in 1834 a group of six workers in Dorchester were sentenced to seven years' transportation on the plea of taking illegal oaths i.e. joining the trade unions. Thus the first phase of the Trade Union Movement ended in a failure. This period was dominated by the Utopian Socialism of Owen, St. Simon and Fourier, who thought that model experiments in humane capitalist management or co-operative production imposed on society by determined pioneers who are out to change society, would be sufficient. These theories certainly criticised the existing capitalist structure; but the secrets of that structure were not yet understood by them. Because as yet the mode of production and with it the antagonisms between Labour and Capital were incomplete. They could not see that the stage was historically inevitable, neither could they discern its roots.

The period of trade union outburst was followed by Chartism in 1838. The movement got its impetus by the crisis of production and marketing in British industry. The workers drafted a petition to Parliament in which they asked for (1) Equal Electoral Districts (2) Universal male suffrage (3) Annual Parliaments (4) No property qualifications for M.Ps (5) Vote by ballot (6) Payment of members.

This was the "Charter" they wanted from the Parliament of the bourgeoisie. A great agitation was raised throughout the country and all the revolutionary energies were directed to obtaining signatures, explaining the points and forming a Convention to adopt a Charter and send it to Parliament. A million and a quarter signatures were obtained and the petition sent to Parliament, which kept silent over it for some time, Chartism gathered strength and became more expressed as regards its aim. It was not to be a harmless petition asking for voting rights. The more energetic and rank-and-file leaders like O'Brien and Julian Harney who was later on associated with Marx for a time, wanted

political power, social equality and almost an imitation of the French Revolution. The Parliament rejected the petition and the advanced Proletarian section of the Convention wanted to take direct action, though it contained strong elements who wanted to rely on "moral force". The Convention was overtaken by hesitation. It wanted to call a General Strike, gave notice of it and then withdrew it. Amidst differences it adjourned and ended. But one revolutionary section, the Welsh Chartists prepared for an armed rising, which was suppressed. The leaders of Chartism were transported in 1840. When the movement subsided some of the leaders were released. In 1842 the movement revived and another petition this time with three million signatures was sent. Again the movement was confronted with the question, 'what is to be done next if the petition is rejected'. The leadership could not think beyond a strike action. Armed uprising was opposed by a section. A strike ultimately did take place. But the trade being bad the employers simply shut their factories and waited. The strike collapsed due to exhaustion. After this there was confusion within the ranks of the leadership. O'Connor, the organiser of the movement, took to the fantastic scheme of independent communes on land settlements built by floating workers' companies. The gradual disillusionment coming to the workers through the failure of Utopian schemes, parliamentary petitions, and unorganised strikes was leading them to the undiluted class outlook which found expression through the columns of the "People's Paper". The revolutionary upheavals on the Continent in 1848 blew a breath of life into the Chartist Movement; there was a demonstration in London, where an attempt was made for the new concentration of forces. But removed as it was from the large working-class centres it collapsed without any achievement. Remnants of the movement persisted, though it was in a decline due to the industrial situation becoming favourable.

The discovery of new regions of mining outside England fostered emigration, which drained off the youthful forces that were behind Chartism. Ernest Jones, a far more revolutionary agitator than the previous Chartists, carried on the movement based on the textile struggles in Preston and Wigan in 1853,

formed a "Mass Movement Committee" and worked for the establishment of the rival Parliament, "The Labour Parliament", at Manchester. The Parliament was still within the confines of Utopian ideology. It wanted to collect national revenue by a levy on wages, support strikes and settle the unemployed workers on land, without any programme of political power. Of course, the scheme could not but collapse. But it was a landmark in the Labour Movement. Marx in his letter to the Parliament dated 9/3/1854 says: "the mere assembling of such a Parliament marks a new epoch in the history of the world. . . . . The labouring classes have conquered nature; they have now to conquer men. To succeed in this attempt they do not want strength but the organisation of their common strength, organisation of the labouring classes on a national scale, such I suppose is the great end aimed at by the Labour Parliament. If the Parliament proves true to the idea that called it into being, some future historian will have to record that there existed in the year 1854 two Parliaments: a Parliament at London and a Parliament at Manchester—a Parliament of the rich and a Parliament of the poor—but that men sat only in the Parliament of the men and not in the Parliament-of the masters."

#### **34. Continental Movements—the Communist League—1848 Revolutions—The League disbands—the Cologne Trial**

On the continent of Europe the workers' movement had not taken any organisational shape as there a capitalist development had not taken place on such a large scale as in England. There the working-class was fighting the battles of its enemies, under the leadership of the petty-bourgeoisie, who betrayed the workers after each fight. The struggles of 1848 however finally disillusioned the workers and freed them from petty-bourgeois leadership though not from its ideology. The February Revolution, in France and the March Revolution in Germany in 1848 were the first great battles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. On 24.2.1848 Louis Philippe was driven out of Paris and the French Republic was proclaimed. On the 13.3.1848 the people of Vienna broke the power of the Austrian monarchy. On the 18th the people

in Berlin rose in arms and after an obstinate struggle of 18 hours had the satisfaction of seeing the king surrender himself into their hands. All these upheavals were in fact the urge of the petty-bourgeoisie towards political power for its own class, a desire for freedom to develop Capitalism and enthrone it in the State in place of the feudal class that held power. The petty bourgeoisie on the basis of the great revolutionary energies of the young working-class of the cities had succeeded in defeating the feudal aristocracy. But when once feudal aristocracy was removed the further revolutionary steps that the working-class wanted to take for its class emancipation alarmed the petty-bourgeoisie. In Paris, Vienna and Berlin along with the petty-bourgeoisie the working-class was also armed. When the revolutions expelled the aristocracy from the big cities, the petty-bourgeois shopkeepers suffered in trade and the workers were thrown out on the streets. Now as regards the political and armed control, the working-class helped by 4,000 students in Vienna was strong enough to overawe the petty-bourgeois section of the revolutionary front. They had borne the burnt of the fight. They wanted the unemployed to be maintained by taxing the cities, that is taxing the petty-bourgeois traders and merchants. This naturally alarmed the petty-bourgeoisie which was already alarmed over the loss of trade due to the flight of the nobility. Capitalism had not yet become so consolidated as to flourish on the markets of an independent petty-bourgeois farming class, the largest and the real market of capitalist trade. The proposals of taxations and maintenance out of State funds which meant a cleavage of classes on the economic front led to a cleavage on the political front. The clash between the petty-bourgeoisie and the workers came to a head in Paris. "It could be fought in France only; for France, as long as England took no part in the revolutionary strife, or as Germany remained divided, was by its national independence, civilisation, and centralisation the only country to impart the impulse of a mighty convulsion to the surrounding countries. On June 23, 1848, the bloody struggle began in Paris, between the mass of the working people on one side and all the other classes of the population on

the other. The counter-revolutionary forces succeeded after severe fighting. The working-class was crushed by the petty-bourgeoisie whom it had raised to power. The French example encouraged the petty-bourgeoisie in Berlin and Vienna. In Berlin they prayed only for a constitutional monarchy; in Vienna when the counter-revolutionary nobility was at the gates they remained passive. Naturally the counter-revolution smashed the working-class forces that offered resistance. The revolution had never changed the old state machinery. Not even the old officers of the army were dismissed, and when the counter-revolutionary attack commenced the old state officers turned traitors from inside. The result was the immediate restoration of the monarchies in Germany and Vienna. It took some time in France, till Louis Bonaparte could muster the peasantry in his favour and carry out the *coup* in 1852. The petty-bourgeoisie that had been frightened by the strength of the working-class, had betrayed it and cheated it out of power, was itself overthrown by the counter-revolution.

The revolution fell because there was not as yet a solid class organisation of the workers, leading them as a class in the struggle for power, under their own banner, and for their own class programme. The proletariat was not yet internationally united, just as the bourgeoisie too was not yet internationally developed and interconnected. Thus in the words of Marx, "every victory so obtained was a victory for the bourgeoisie". In France, the bourgeoisie had succeeded in rallying the peasantry to its aid for reasons which we have already noted before (Para 24). This period is described by Lenin as "the first period in the birth of socialist ideas and the germs of class-struggle of the proletariat. This is the period of the preparation and birth of Marxism, the only doctrine of Socialism which has stood the test of history."

The gradual developing class consciousness of the workers in England, France and Germany found its expression in the formation of the Communist League, a working-class association, which was first exclusively German, but later on International. It had its roots in Paris and Berlin, its activities were directed first

from Brussels and then from London. The moving spirits of the League were Marx, Engels, Karl Schapper, Moll and Harney of the Chartists.

The Communist Manifesto, now the most famous and classical document of Communism, was issued on behalf of this League, which in its London Congress in November 1847 had directed Marx and Engels to prepare a complete theoretical and practical Party Programme. The Manifesto is the first clear and comprehensive statement of the ideals of the working-class, as a class, and is the first formulation of the slogan of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." The Manifesto was drafted in January 1848 and was in the last stages of publication when the February Revolution occurred in Paris. The League could do very little in the revolution as the active sympathisers of the League in Paris were in the ranks of the Blanquists. After the defeat of all the revolutions the members of the League had to seek refuge in the various lands. Men like Schapper and Willich still dreamed of fresh revolutionary outbreaks. An attempt to link up with Germany was made but failed. Soon after in May 1851 the raid on the Central Committee in Cologne took place. The arrested persons were kept in prison without trial for seventeen months. The trial began on 4.10.1852 lasting up to 12.11.1853. Seven of them were sentenced to from three to six years. During that trial the capitalist counter-revolutionary Prosecution and the Court behaved as they are accustomed to behave under the bourgeois system. During the trial the principal forgerer witness admitted that the evidence which he supplied to the Government was forged in London at the instruction of Government. When the defence tried to procure evidence from London, the counsel's correspondence from Cologne with the London Communist refugees, made openly with the knowledge of the Court, was treated as complicity in the alleged plot.

### **35. British Unions—the 1st International—Statutes**

With the development of industry, the proletariat not only grows in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The collisions

between individual workman and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. The workers combine and give fight. Sometimes they are victorious, but only for a time. However, the real fruit of their battle lies not in the immediate result but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped by the improving means of communication created by modern industry.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle; at first with the aristocracy, then with certain sections of the bourgeoisie itself and at all times with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for help and thus drag it into political arena. The bourgeoisie itself therefore supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words it furnishes the proletariat with the weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie. Further entire sections of the ruling classes, like the petty-bourgeoisie and tradesmen, are by the advance of industry precipitated into the ranks of the proletariat or at least are threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

After the failure of the Chartist Movement the trade unions revived in England on a national scale. In 1850 the Amalgamated Society of Engineers was followed by other trade unions. In 1858 the *Trade Councils* were started to temporarily unite all the local unions in towns (The Bombay Trade Council was formed in 1928—70 years from London to Bombay!). The progress of trade unions evoked an attack from the employers, to counteract which a general conference was convened in 1864. Lock-outs and strikes followed, as the trade crisis deepened. The attempt to suppress the movement did not succeed. Moreover the expansion in trade, the fall in prices and such other factors had created an aristocracy which in no way adhered to the revolutionary traditions of Chartism. In order to buy this off into peaceful parliamentary

bourgeois methods, the Reform Act of 1867 gave voting rights to householders in towns and thus split off a section from the lower ranks of the proletariat. In 1868 the first regular Trade Union Congress met. The Criminal Breach of Contract Act (which prevailed in India till 1923) was repealed and the Trade Union Act was passed in 1871 (a measure which appeared in India in 1926).

At this time under the inspiration of Marx the English and French workers founded the International Working Men's Association or the first International in London on 28.9.1864. This First International inherited all the spirit of the Communist League, which later passed on in unbroken tradition to the Third Communist International. The aims and objects of the Third International are essentially the same as those of the First International. The statutes of the First International which were drafted by Marx and adopted with minor alterations by the Association stand as follows: "That the emancipation of the working-class is to be attained by the working-class itself. That the struggle for the emancipation of the working-class does not mean a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but a struggle for equal rights and equal obligations, for the abolition of every kind of class domination. That the economic subjection of the workers under the monopolists of the means of production, that is of the sources of life, is the cause of servitude in all its forms, the cause of all social miseries, all mental degradation, and political dependence. That the emancipation of the working-class is therefore the great aim to which every political movement must be sub-ordinated. That all endeavours for this great aim have failed as yet because of the lack of the solidarity between the various branches of industry in all countries, because of the absence of the fraternal tie of unity between the working-classes of the different countries. That the emancipation is neither a local nor a national problem but a problem of social character embracing every civilised country and the solution of which depends on the theoretical and practical co-operation of the most progressive countries. That the actual simultaneous revival of the



workers' movement in the industrial countries of Europe on the one hand awakens new hopes, whilst on the other it is a solemn warning of the danger of relapse into the old errors and an appeal for the immediate union of the hitherto disconnected movement.

D/- 2.11.31.

The statutes are dominated by the thoughts proceeding from the experiences of 1848. The proletariat then had depended on the petty-bourgeoisie. The workers in Vienna did not know what their comrades in Paris did, so successful was Metternich in isolating them ideologically. Moreover there was a danger of the workers busying themselves with constitution—making like the bourgeoisie, and forgetting its fundamental economic and social aim. Therefore the warning was sounded. It can be seen from this that if the Proletarian Parties of today—the Communist Parties—unite internationally in a centralised Communist International they are avoiding the blunders of 1848 and are following the directions of the First as much as of the Third International. If confiscation of bourgeois property along with the destruction of the bourgeois State looms so large in the Communist programme, it is the outcome of the betrayals of 1848 and 1871. We are following the First as much as the Third International in this also. To the philistine bourgeois brain the “conspiracy of ideas” begins with the Third International. Unfortunately for them, their list of “co-conspirators”, is sadly incomplete. This “conspiracy” began in 1847, is cemented by the blood of the heroes of 1848 and corrected by the subsequent experiences of the working-class. We have been affiliated internationally in the ideals and statutes of 1864 of which 1919 is merely a repetition in a different epoch. Our chains are soldered with those of our Cologne comrades of the First Communist Trial eighty years ago. But we are more fortunate than they. Behind Cologne stood the unsuccessful June Rising of the Parisian workers, before it swung the future corpses of the heroic Paris communards. But behind Meerut stands the 12 years old proletarian power of the Soviet Union and before it swings the sweep of the mighty Indian revolution.

### 36. **The period of the First International—American Civil War—Marxist Address to Lincoln—British Workers' attitude then and now**

The period of the First International was the period of great upheavals and crises. It was the period when the Italian petty-bourgeoisie was fighting its class battles under the bourgeois republicanism of Mazzini, ultimately to end in monarchy supported by the farmer Commander Garibaldi. A revival of revolutionary activity was seen in France. In Russia under the influence of the bourgeois democratic ideas of its Western neighbours, the incapacity of absolutely feudal conditions of production to stand in competition against the production of the Western peasantry working under freer conditions, and the pressure from within of the ripening bourgeois economy led the autocratic Czar to decree the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 but it was niggardly carried out and defeated by the landowners till 1905; still not until 1917 was serfdom fully uprooted. In 1861 the Civil War in America began, the war for the extinction of slavery. Bourgeois history clothes this war in a lot of sentimental stuff about the humanitarian feelings of the North as against the slaveholders of the South that wished to retain the slaves. Most of our petty-bourgeois intelligentsia who do not view this episode from the dialectical point of view are cheated by the manner in which the bourgeois historians present this episode and point with pride to the great achievements and civilising role of the "West". But in fact the bourgeoisie in England played the most reactionary role in this Civil War. The Southern States of America rested on the production of cotton through slave labour, while in the North the bourgeoisie was developing an advanced economy based on free labour and farming carried on by independent farmers on their field. The existence of the Southern slave system depended on its extension to larger territories. America with its vast virgin land provided good field for such an expansion. The expansion of slavery of the South meant the extinction of the freedom of the Northern farmers and with it of the bourgeoisie and working-class. "The present struggle between South and North is nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery

and the system of free labour. Because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American Continent, the struggle has broken out. It can only be ended by the victory of one of the other." (Marx, 7th November, 1861). The Civil War was fought on these issues. The bourgeoisie of the North, suffering from the corruption inherent in the class took up the question in a lukewarm manner. It was even prepared to compromise with the South. In his letter to Engels dated July 1, 1861 Marx says: "I found that the conflict between the South and the North—after the latter had been degrading itself for the last 50 years from one concession to another—finally came to blows through the weight cast into the balance by the extraordinary development of the North West States. This population, richly mixed with fresh German and English elements, besides that, essentially self-working farmers, was naturally not so inclined to be intimidated as the gentlemen of the Wall Street and the Quakers of Boston." The population of these North West States was 7,870,869 as against the 5,000,000 of the seceding slave States. The corruption in the bourgeois management of the war was overcome by the revolutionary elements of the farmers and workers and the war was won.

The First International on its foundation sent an address: to Abraham Lincoln, congratulating him on his re-election to the Presidency which he had held during the anti-slavery struggle. Marx, the founder of Communism, which is the enemy of the bourgeoisie, sending an address to the President of the bourgeois Republic! Why? Because historically a bourgeois republic involving the destruction of the slave oligarchy is a forward step in the progress of society to a Socialist revolution. Enemy of all slavery, Communism considers the wage-slavery of the modern worker as a higher stage in the social advance to freedom. Hence the address. But the address itself is not a piece of vulgar sycophancy, as is found in the innumerable addresses that are presented by the Indian bourgeoisie to their imperialist masters or its patriotic agents. The address did not want the American people to be lost in wage slavery after overthrowing chattel slavery. It wanted death to all forms of slavery. "We congratulate the

American people on your re-election by large majority. If resistance to the slave power were the reserved watchwords upon your first election, the triumphant war cry of your re-election is 'death to slavery'. From the commencement of the titanic American strife the workingmen of Europe felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class. The contest for the territories that opened the dire epogee, was it not to decide whether the virgin soil of the immense tracts should be wedded to the labour of the immigrant or the prostituted tramp of the slave-holder? When an oligarchy of three hundred thousand slave-holders dared to inscribe for the first time in the history of the world, slavery on the banner of armed revolt, when on the very spot where hardly a century ago an idea of one great Republic had first sprung up, whence the first declarations of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulses given to the European revolutions of the 18th century; when on those very spots counter-revolution, with systematic thoroughness, gloried in rescinding the ideas entertained at the time of the formation of the old constitution and maintained slavery to be a beneficent institution, indeed the only solution of the great problem of relation of Capital to Labour, and cynically proclaimed property in men the corner stone of the new edifice; then the working-classes of Europe understood at once, even before the frantic partisanship of the upper classes for the Confederate gentry had given its dismal warning that the slave holders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for the general holy crusade of property against labour and that for the men of labour with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous conflict on the other side of the Atlantic. Everywhere they bore therefore patiently the hardships imposed upon them by the cotton crises, opposed enthusiastically the pro-slavery intervention importunities of their betters, and from most parts of Europe contributed their quota of blood to the good cause. While the workmen, the true political power of the North, allowed slavery to defile their Republic, while before the negro mastered and sold without his concurrence they boasted in the highest prerogative of the white skinned labourer to sell himself and choose his own master, they

were unable to attain the true freedom of Labour, or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation; but this barrier of progress has been swept off by the Red Sea of Civil War.

The working-men of Europe feel sure that as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class so the American anti-slavery war will do for the working-classes."

The attitude of the European workers and especially of the British and French referred to above affords a strong contrast to the attitude that they are now asked to adopt towards the Indian and colonial struggle for emancipation. The American Civil War stopped the exports of cotton which was supplied from the Southern plantations to the British textile mills. The import of raw cotton fell from 1140.6 million pounds in 1860 to 309.3 in 1862. Thereby 60.3 per cent spindles and 58 per cent looms were rendered idle. Mills were closed down, and workers in England and also in France were thrown out on the streets. A similar result has happened due to the revolutionary situation in China and India. In 1862, the workers in spite of starvation supported their comrades in the North because the Civil War was a crusade of slave property against free labour. The British bourgeoisie whose profits were threatened by the closure of mills, though at home it had voted 20 million pounds for the liberation of slaves, sympathised with the Southern slave holding States. "The entire official English Press", wrote Marx to Lassalle on 29th May, 1861, "is naturally for the slaveholders. They are the same fellows who have tired the world with their anti-slave-trade philanthropy. But, cotton, cotton!" The bourgeoisie tried to incite the workers to demonstrate against the North and bring pressure for compromise. But it failed. And today the same tale is repeated. The whole bourgeoisie is trying to suppress the movements in China, India and the Soviet Republic, and inciting the workers to side with it in its counter-revolutionary activities by telling them that they are losing their bread due to the revolutionary activities of the working-class in other countries. What a strange contrast the attitude of Lancashire workers of 1862 presents to that now adopted by their Trade Union bureaucracy, that allows gun-boats

to be manned by the British workers against the Chinese and Indian workers. The International solidarity of the working-class written on the banner of the Comintern is thus a principle which in history has brought freedom from slavery to the whole American Republic and will now bring freedom from wage slavery to whole world. We are but continuing the traditions of the Lancashire workers of 1862, when we ask them to keep "Hands Off" the revolutionary working-class and peasantry of India and China who are waging a war of freedom from slavery to Imperialism and Capitalism.

### **37. The Paris Commune**

The period of the First International was enriched by another experience, very valuable to the proletarian class struggle. That was the lesson of the Paris Commune. With the establishment and fall of the Commune closes a period, which completes the task of laying completely the theoretical foundations of Marxism, ideologically tested in the revolutionary struggles of 1848 and 1871. With the fall of the Commune the ideological bondage of the European working-class to the glamour and promises of bourgeois democracy also fell. With the fall of the Commune, the highest experience of the First International, the International also collapsed. But it left a complete system of Marxism, a complete and scientific understanding of the foundations of the bourgeois order that killed the Commune, and a formulation of the proletarian revolutionary movement that would resurrect the Commune over the ruins of its murderers on a colossal scale.

On the eve of the Franco-German War of 1870, the Paris members of the First International issued a Manifesto "to the workmen of all nations", in which they said, "brothers of Germany! our division would result only in the complete triumph of despotism on both sides of the Rhine . . . workmen of all countries! Whatever may for the present become of our common efforts, we the members of the International Working Men's Association, who know of no frontiers, we send you as a pledge of indissoluble solidarity, the good wishes and the salutations of the workmen of France." (Exh. P. 1179-D 409). The workmen of

Paris and Germany protested against the war under the leadership of the International, but the forces of reaction had their game alright. At the commencement of the war, the German Emperor and Bismark had made it appear that for them it was a war of defence. But when, after the battle of Sedan, the rottenness of the "Second Empire" of France became visible, the war was turned into a war of annexations. Germany asked for "guarantees" from France (Just as today France asks "guarantees" from Germany). The guarantees were the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine and an indemnity of five milliard francs. On hearing of the defeat and the news that the German armies were marching on Paris, the workers of Paris overthrew the Empire and declared a Republic on 4.9.1870. In this rising the workers were led by the secret organisations of Blanqui, the most redoubtable and uncompromising leader of the revolution, and also by the representatives of the First International. Though this time as in every other case, the workers were the revolutionary forces, the actual Government was set up by "a Cabal of place-hunting barristers with Thiers as their statesman". The Blanquist and Marxist sections though quite aware of the reactionary bourgeois character of the Government so formed allowed it to function as the Prussians were at the gates of the Republic to drown it in blood. Blanqui wrote, "all opposition, all contradiction must disappear before the common need. There is only one enemy, the Prussian and his allies, the partisan of the fallen dynasty who wishes Prussian bayonets to restore order in Paris." But the new Government was a five of treacherous fellows who under the cloak of putting up a defence of Paris against the invaders were in fact trying to sell it. "Paris, however, was not to be defended without arming its workers, organising them into an effective force and training their ranks by the war itself. But Paris armed was revolution armed. A victory of Paris over the Prussian aggressors would have been a victory of the French workman over the French capitalist and his State parasites. In this conflict between national duty and class interest, the Government of National Defence did not hesitate one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection." (Here one may well be

reminded of the refusal of the Indian bourgeoisie to draw the revolutionary working-class and peasantry in India into a direct and active conflict with Imperialism. The victory of the Indian workers and peasants over Imperialism is a victory of the Indian workers over the Indian bourgeoisie. In this conflict between national duty and class interest the Congress of national independence does not hesitate one moment to turn into a Congress of national defection by the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement.)

The Republican Government was headed by Thiers that monstrous gnome who had charmed the French bourgeoisie for almost half a century, because he was the most consummate intellectual expression of their own class corruption. Before he became a statesman, he had already proved his lying powers as a historian. The chronicle of his public life is a record of misfortunes of France. Scenting a popular commotion in the February Revolution of 1848, he had declared "I shall always be of the party of the revolution." When the revolution came and the working-class instead of changing one ministry for another superseded Louis Philippe by the Republic, Thiers was disappointed and carefully hid himself, "forgetting that the contempt of the workingmen screened him from their hatred. After the June Massacre of the revolutionary workers, he became the leading mind of the "Party of Order". Fond of brandishing with his dwarfish arms in the face of Europe, the sword of the first Napoleon whose historical shoe-black he had become, his foreign policy always culminated in the utter humiliation of France. Despite his versatility of talent, and shiftiness of purpose, this man had his whole lifetime been wedded to the most fossil routine. To him the deeper under-currents of modern society remained for ever hidden, but even the most palpable changes in its surface were abhorrent to a brain, all the vitality of which had fled to the tongue. Thus he never tired of denouncing as a sacrilege any deviation from the old French protective system. When a minister of Louis Philippe he railed at the railways as a wild chimera; and when in opposition under Louis Bonaparte he branded as a profanation every attempt to reform the rotten French army system. Thiers was consistent only in his greed for



wealth and his hatred of the men that produced it. Having entered his first ministry under Louis Philippe poor as job he left it a millionaire. A master in small State roguery, a virtuoso in perjury and treason, a craftsman in all the petty stratagems, cunning devices and base perfidies of parliamentary party warfares, never scrupling when out of office, to fan the revolution, and to stifle it in blood when at the helm of the State, with class prejudices standing him in place of ideas, and vanity in place of a heart; his private life as infamous as his public life was odious—even when playing the part of a French Sulla, he could not help setting off the abomination of his deeds by the ridicule of his ostentation. This Thiers, along with his "Cabinet" which was composed of Jules Favre, who by forgeries, proved in court, had become a rich man, of Ernest Piccard, who in conjunction with his brother, a man who was convicted of theft of 30,000 francs from the banks, set false news going about from his Home Office to contrive the Stock Exchange rates to suit his speculation, and such others, set about electing a bogus Assembly and in its name convincing Paris and France of the necessity of surrender to Bismark. By their conspiracy and treason the Fort of Metz fell. When the workers of Paris heard this they attempted on 31.10.1870 to drive the Government out. But they did not succeed. The forces led by Blanqui recoiled before the idea of turning the national war into a civil war which alone was the guarantee of success of the national war. Blanqui yielded and a compromise again took place. It was agreed that the old Government should return, should hold new elections and make no Prosecutions. Thiers, consistent in his treachery, carried out the first two conditions but arrested as many opponents as he could. Elections were bound to be as desired by him, as one third of the territory was under the Germans, and the capital was cut off from the provinces. Thiers fooled the peasantry by the most lying statements about the revolutionary workers in Paris. A show Assembly sat and decided on capitulation on 27.1.1871.

The workers of Paris who were the real revolutionary sections behind the Republic were now confronted with the treachery of the bourgeoisie, which had surrendered to the enemy because its

class interests were threatened. Paris had either to lay down her arms at the insulting behest of the rebellious slave-holders of Boardeaux and acknowledge that her revolution of 4.9.1870 meant nothing but a simple transfer of power from Louis Bonaparte to his royal rivals; or she had to stand forward as the self-sacrificing champion of France, whose salvation from ruin and regeneration were impossible without the revolutionary overthrow of the political and social conditions that had engendered the Second Empire and under its fostering care matured into rottenness. Paris emaciated by a five months' famine did not hesitate one movement. The civil war was opened by Thiers who sent some regiments to seize the artillery of the National Guards. The attempt failed, the usurpers were driven out. Thiers and his gang fled to Versailles. On 18.3.1871 the glorious workingmen's revolution took undisputed sway of Paris. The Paris Commune, the first embodiment of Marxism, of Proletarian Revolution, came into existence under the shadows of the frowning artillery of the Prussians and the treacherous French bourgeoisie at Versailles calling itself the National Government.

### **38. We stand by the Commune—the French Bourgeoisie killed the French Workers' Commune**

Who had overthrown the corrupt debt-ridden Empire of Louis Bonaparte? The working-class. Who were fighting uncompromisingly against the Prussian army? The workers. What were the patriotic bourgeoisie led by Thiers doing? Arranging the terms of capitulation and the massacre of revolutionary Paris. In spite of exasperation, the workers, so long as capitulation was not a fact, bore with the Government of patriotic forgers and Stock Exchange robbers, in order not to hamper the defence of France. It is not they who started the civil war. It was the patriotic and treacherous counter revolutionary bourgeoisie, who with the aid of the invaders' guns attacked Paris in order to make the revolutionary workers agree to the Thiers-Bismark Agreement. "The Paris workers were putting the pact in danger", so cried Thiers, and his patriotic gangs. "The pact is in danger", so cries Mahatma Gandhi and his patriotic gangs, sixty years after the

Commune, in a different part of the world. Thiers, that monstrous gnome, called in the aid of the Prussian enemies' bayonets to compel revolutionary Paris to observe the "pact" and pay five milliard indemnity to the German King. Gandhi, the Mahatma, and his patriotic bourgeoisie helped the British bayonets, realise from the revolutionary peasantry forty crores of the annual British land revenue loot. In subjective idealism Thiers was corruption and cowardice. In subjective idealism the Mahatma is self-sacrifice and heroism. But though in personal character the two are poles apart, objectively the effect of the actions of both is the defence of the reactionary exploiting interests of the bourgeoisie. Success of the Communards meant the repudiation of the huge national debts held mostly by the patriotic French bourgeoisie. Success to the revolutionary peasantry in India means the repudiation not only of the national debts but also of the six hundred crores of peasant debts held by the patriotic money-lenders in India. Thiers asked Bismark to lend the Prussian guns to support the "pact". Gandhi asks Irwin to lend his "goodwill" to support the "pact"—the goodwill behind which stand the good and willin<sup>g</sup> bayonets of the Empire.

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Thiers was not a Mahatma. When his counter-revolutionary forces entered Paris on the corpses of the workers, he left them to rot and stink and buried them even half alive. But the Congress of the Mahatmas is more subtle. It emasculates the revolutionary peasantry with slogans of peace and love, conferences and talks; disarms the revolution before it is bayoneted and afterwards provides "ambulance cars", a box of medicines and a box of Inquiry Committees, to inquire whether revolution clad in the rags of the starving peasant was shot with or without a warning of a Magistrate. Sixty years of Imperialist culture have given the patriotic Indian bourgeoisie a sense of humour, of which Thiers, the French Sulla, had not the advantage.

In this case we are alleged to have conspired with the Third International to establish a regime in India on the Soviet model. We are said to have received fantastic ideas and inspiration from

"the penny yellow books found at the rickety bookshop windows in India, eagerly devoured by the sex-hungry youths of India", as Miss Mayo likes to put it. But unfortunately the blood-hungry historians of Imperialism have forgotten history. Before the Soviet was born, there was the Paris Commune. There was the First International that embodied all the ideology of the Commune, before the Third International contained the ideology of the Soviet. Gentlemen of the bourgeoisie; we uphold the principles of the Communist League classically expressed in its Manifesto of 1847; we are descended from the First International of 1864. We wave the banner of the Paris Commune of 1871, drowned in the red blood of the Paris workers by the patriotic French bourgeoisie and unfurled again 40 years later by the working-class and peasantry of Russia. Our parentage is more ancient and nobler than the degenerate historians of the bourgeoisie think.

### 39. *The Commune and its degrees*

What was the Commune? In what way did it distinguish itself from the Empire or the Republic? The Commune was that form of the State which the working-class was trying to find and had failed to find since the February Revolution of 1848. On 18th March, the Central Committee in its Manifesto said, "Proletarians of Paris, amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs . . . They have understood that it is their imperious and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies by seizing upon the Governmental power." But the Governmental power of the working-class essentially differs in form and content from that of the bourgeoisie. "The working-class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes." The working-class had made the revolutions and each time they had surrendered the State power into the hands of the bourgeoisie, who centralised and directed the State machinery in order to suppress the working-class and peasantry and exploit them with greater violence. In the

19th century took place the development of "the centralised State Power, originating from the middle ages, with its ubiquitous organs, standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy and judges." With the development of class antagonisms between Capital and Labour, "the State assumed more and more the character of a public organisation for the oppression of labour i.e. of a machine for class domination. After every revolution marking a certain advance in the class struggle the merely oppressive character of the power of the State became more and more apparent. The State, after the revolution of 1848-49, becomes the natural weapon of Capital in its war against labour." The second Empire had consolidated this. The Commune was the direct anti-thesis of the Empire. It was a definite form of a Republic which was to abolish not only the monarchical form of class rule but also class rule itself (References Exhs: P. 528 and P. 1179). The Commune was not a change over from the Government of a Conservative Party of the bourgeoisie to the Government by a Labour Party of His Majesty, the bourgeoisie. It was not a change over from the Government of Mahatma Irwin to the Government of His Excellency Gandhi. It was aimed at the fundamental alteration in the production relations of society. It was the transference of the productive forces held by the bourgeoisie to the direct administration of the producers. It was not a change merely in the superstructure but in the basis also. Therefore the Commune could not halt only with the expulsion of Thiers; it had to destroy the bourgeois State machine and replace it by one in which the working-class was organised as the ruling class.

The first decree of the Commune was the abolition of the standing army and its replacement by the nation in arms. The Police, until then merely an instrument of the Government, was immediately stripped of all its political functions and turned into the responsible and at any time replaceable organ of the Commune. The same was applied to the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Council of the Commune down to the humblest worker everybody in the public service was paid at the rate of workman's wages as an ordinary workingman. All privileges and representation

allowances attached to the high offices of the State disappeared along with the offices themselves. Having got rid of the standing Army and the Police, the material weapons of the old Government, the Commune turned its attention without delay to breaking the weapons of spiritual oppression the power of the priests. The judicial functionaries lost their sham independence. In future they were to be elected openly and to be responsible and revocable. The Commune realised that ideal of all bourgeois revolutions, cheap Government, by eliminating the two largest items of expenditure—the Army and the bureaucracy. But neither cheap Government nor the "true Republic" was its ultimate aim, they were its mere concomitants. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class Government, the produce of struggle of the producing class against the appropriating class; the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of Labour.

The Council of the Commune consisted of municipal representatives elected by universal suffrage in the various districts of Paris. They were responsible and could be recalled at any time. The majority were naturally working-men or acknowledged representatives of the working-class. But this form of the Commune is not to be confounded with breaking up of a centralised apparatus into decentralised piecemeal social groups of Communes or Panchayats (as dreamed of by the reactionary Utopian petty-bourgeois). Modern methods of industrial production and planning rule this out. The decentralisation, as it appears, is merely an instrument to bring out the great initiative of the Proletariat and to associate it directly with every function of the State authority of its own class. In spite of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workman and manager in his business. The Commune was to have been not a Parliamentary but working corporation, Legislative and Executive at the same time. Its special measures could not but be-taken the tendency of the Government of the people by the people. Such were the abolition

of the night work of journeymen bakers; the prohibition under penalty of the employers' practice to reduce wages by levying upon their work people fines under manifold pretexts—a process in which the employer combines in his own person the parts of Legislator, Judge and executioner, and filches the money to boot. Another measure of this class was the surrender to associations of working-men, under reserve of compensation of all closed workshops and factories, no matter, whether the respective capitalists had absconded or preferred to strike work. The Commune relieved the middle class of Paris—shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants—of the ever-recurring cause of dispute, the debtor and the creditor accounts. This was the first and the last revolution in which the working-class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative by the great bulk of the middle class. The Parisian middle-class unlike that of Soviet Russia, due to its circumstances under the Empire, the robbery and suppression it had to undergo then in the interest of the big capitalists, stood by the Commune.

The Commune declared to the peasants that "its victory was their only hope". The bourgeoisie in 1848 had burdened him with additional taxation and wanted to shift on his shoulder the indemnity. The Commune declared that the peasant would be relieved of the blood tax and transform his blood-suckers, the notary, advocate, executor, and other judicial vampires into salaried communal agents elected by and responsible to himself. The French peasantry was thoroughly debt-ridden and was getting ready to overthrow its oppressors. The bourgeoisie at Versailles saw this already and they cut off Paris from the peasantry, spread lies about the Commune and massacred the Commune before the peasantry could come to its aid.

Since the establishment of the Commune, whilst robbery and thieving had left Paris along with Thiers and the bourgeoisie to reign at Versailles, there were no massacres or murders in Paris under the Commune. Through Thiers was sending spies to provoke attacks and pogroms, the Commune used the bullet on very few occasions. While Thiers was everyday shooting the national guards and Communards that strayed by chance in his

range, the Commune did not shoot the hostages retained by it as guarantee for its men held by Thiers. On the very day when the Commune's Red Flag was raised Thiers arrested Blanqui and hurried out of Paris with his valuable prisoners. The Commune negotiated for exchange of prisoners, offered to release and give every man of Thiers in exchange for Blanqui. But the Versailles bourgeoisie replied "to give Blanqui to the Commune is to give it a head." Blanqui was imprisoned in a fortress with death sentence hanging over him for the rising of October 31, for daring to oppose the sale of France to Prussia by the patriots.

The Central Committee of the Commune elected on 26th March, 1871 consisted of 92 members of whom 72 were Socialists. Amongst them the Blanquists were in a majority, while only 17 were Marxists, i.e. members of the First International. All of them were not men of calibre. Some were pure boasters and talkers. But that was inevitable in view of the youth and inexperience of the working-class of that period. The Commune had failed to seize the Bank of France a fatal mistake which embarrassed it financially. On the 18th March when Thiers fled to Versailles the Commune did not attack Versailles and thus break the counter-revolutionary stronghold which, if done, would have prevented the subsequent isolation of the Commune from the peasantry. When the spies of Thiers and his agents entered the Commune sufficient Red terror was not established against them. These mistakes, the mistakes of the youthful working-class in the face of the bourgeoisie that commanded a huge military machine and all the roguery and treachery of years of bourgeois State craft were great mistakes. The bourgeoisie consolidated its position and attacked the Commune. The heroic Communards, working-men and women fought to the last. The last fortress of the Commune fell on 29th May. The bourgeoisie shot and massacred thousands of men and women first in the battle and then in the orgy of judicial murders when the bourgeois Government was restored.

#### **40. What did Marxism learn from the Commune?**

The experience of the Commune completed the part of Marxian theory on the question of the State. The Commune fell



on 29th May. Marx considered the Commune such an important even in history that the very next day he read in London before the General Council of the International his thesis "The Civil War in France." (P.1179.) The work is not only a theoretical exposition but a defence of the Commune, a classical and most brilliant account of the whole course of events and the only true and correct account of the Commune up till now.

As early as the Manifesto of 1847, Marx had come to the conclusion that the whole course of development must lead to the seizure of political power by the working-class which then becomes organised as the ruling class. The experiences of the revolutionary period of the 1848-51 had shown that after each revolution the workers were armed. Consequently the first commandment of every bourgeois at the head of the State was the disarmament of the workers. Accordingly after every revolution won by the workers a new struggle arose which ended with their defeat. The oppressing class did not leave arms with the oppressed class. It perfected the machinery of oppression the more irrespective of the fact whether the form of the State so established was monarchy or a Parliamentary Democracy. Naturally the working-class when it becomes the ruling class must suppress the overthrown bourgeoisie. This suppression is not the same as the suppression of the working-class and peasantry by the bourgeoisie. The former is a suppression of a parasitic minority by the majority, the people, who are producers of wealth. The latter is a counter-revolutionary suppression of the majority, the people, by the minority, the bourgeoisie, in order to continue the appropriation of wealth socially produced by the majority. As this oppression and exploitation of the working-class is upheld and organised through the State, the working-class has to destroy this bourgeois State. Marx had not yet found what the working-class will substitute in its place. The idea of a Dictatorship of the Proletariat was born in the forties but its form was not clear. Marxists are not speculators or Utopians. Marx waited for history to give the answer. The Commune was the answer. The working-class does not set up a Parliamentary Democracy of the bourgeois type. The working-class cannot

continue with old bureaucratic machine. The bourgeois State, i.e. its bureaucracy, Army, Police, Judiciary has to be replaced by the Commune State, now called the Soviet State. That was the form "discovered at last" by the working-class to administer its Dictatorship during the transition to Socialism.

The new State administering the Dictatorship of the Proletariat for the minority composed of the parasites, who are now deprived of their political power and therefore plot the counter-revolution with tenfold intensity, is not a "State in the proper sense of the word" because it is no longer an organ of an exploiting class to hold down by organised violence the exploited class. Petty-bourgeois writers fail to understand this character of the new State. And some of them think that whereas formerly the capitalists exploited the workers, now the workers will exploit the capitalists. Such thinking betrays a lack of understanding of the essence of the social relation of classes in economy. The essence of capitalist economy is that a parasitic non-working bourgeois class, by its ownership of the instruments of production which is fortified by its militarism organised in the State, extracts surplus values from the working-class and peasantry which is compelled to sell its labour power to the bourgeoisie, and appropriates it for its own class interests. That is exploitation of one class by another. In the proletarian State, the working-class organised in the State "owns" the means of production and "employs" itself to work them. The surplus they produce is not surplus value in the former sense, that is it is not produced by the sale of wage labour of one class to another class and is not appropriated by or for that parasitic class; to again become capital, that is a further means of extracting more surplus value. Now in such a State, if the former dispossessed bourgeoisie is forced to work in the factories and fields, it is not selling its wage labour to any parasitic class in order to produce profits for that class, because the bourgeois turned into a workman is now his own employer, a member of the working-class. It is obvious that we cannot be said to "exploit" ourselves when we work to produce values, which come back to us in another form and are not appropriated by a parasitic class. The bourgeois State and the

feudal State were organised to uphold the "exploiting" and "exploited" relations between two classes and to keep the exploiting in power and exploited in subjection. Since the economic category of exploitation which is the basis of all the previous States vanishes when the proletariat abolishes private ownership and appropriation of social necessities, the proletarian State ceases to possess the essence of the former State. Therefore, it is no longer a State in the proper sense of the word.

Neither the Commune nor the Soviet resembles the Parliamentary institutions of the bourgeoisie. The Parliamentary institutions as found in the bourgeois State are merely a screen to delude the working-class and peasantry into thinking that they themselves determine their own fate through the suffrage, that in spite of this, if their poverty is not removed, the evil lies in the "eternity of poverty" or an "unknowable force." The Commune or the Soviet differs from the parliamentary institution in that it is a "working institution." It undertakes both the executive and legislative functions, is directly engaged in the production and distribution of commodities. The Commune or Soviet is also based on the elective principle. Only so long as the former dispossessed bourgeoisie is not rendered harmless, the suffrage is restricted to the workers and poorer peasants. The Soviet is the present form of the Commune which accomplishes in the best available manner the association of the producers directly in the administration of things.

**41. Close of the First International period—factions in the First International—growth of the State machine—decline of Blanquism and Anarchism—International Congresses—literature of Communism—works of Marx and Engels**

The fall of the Commune closed one historical period in the growth of the bourgeoisie as well as of the proletarian class-struggle. As we have seen earlier (para 26) the bourgeoisie embarked on a period of large scale production, trustification and colonial expansion. The capitalist State became more centralised, more perfected in its technique that is its bureaucracy, military,

police prisons etc. This made it invulnerable to Blanquist coups or anarchist (Bakuninist) attacks. It was not possible any longer to overthrow the bourgeoisie by the strength of a secret "Society of Seasons" in the absence of an all national crisis. With the expansion of Capitalism and conquest of colonies, a section of the working-class began to be bought over and turned into an aristocracy of labour amenable to bourgeois influence. The continuous fall in prices led to a more or less general increase in real wages and reduced the incentive to risings. The strong wave of repression that was set in motion by the bourgeoisie alarmed at the Commune and all that it signified, rooted out many a revolutionary working-class group and the working-class transferred its struggle to the industrial front.

The experience of the Commune completed the revolutionary theory of Marxism especially on the question of the bourgeois State machinery. But with the fall of the Commune also fell the International. The International was not a strong party organisation exclusively of Communists or Marxists as the Third International<sup>1</sup> is. The First International served as a federation of trade unions as also an organisation of revolutionaries, who took their stand on Socialism as their final aim. This was due to the fact that the bourgeoisie, and the petty-bourgeoisie especially, had not yet perfected their political domination as against the feudal elements and were, therefore, compelled to call the workers into directly political conflicts which led to the trade unions being participants in purely political action. The rigid limitation of trade unions to industrial action was a growth of the later period when the sharp division of classes led to the system of party, each class creating its own political party, which of course, was bound to rest basically on the economic organisation of the particular class. The Socialism of the revolutionaries in the International, though one in its main outlines and agreeing with Marxism, was not agreed as to the correct methods of its achievement. There were in the International Proudhonists, Bakuninists, Mazzinists, Blanquists and Marxists, all with different ideas regarding the course which the revolution ought to take, the role of the State, the nature of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and such other vital questions.

The Proudhonists thought that with their very radical description of property as theft they were Socialists; while in practice and after a further elaboration of theory they were found to be merely against the excessive concentration of property and upheld the small capitalists. They were opposed to strikes also. It was the "Socialism" of the shopkeepers. The Mazzinists shouted for God and thus made room for the clergy under whose ample clock masqueraded 'mammon'. The Mazzinist's bourgeois God was pounced upon by the Bakuninist's campaign against "God and State". And the latter would even bring the forces of the nether world to smash the State "now and at once, in any way you can, wherever you can." Smash the State and society and its economy will take care of itself. He also considered the petty-bourgeois middle class a stronger revolutionary element than the working-class. The Blanquists were nearest to the Marxists but they believed in the secret society and the military coup by the workers, as the sole form of revolutionary action for establishing the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Marxism included and was greater than Blanquism had nothing in common with Bakuninism, except the final stage of society wherein, both agreed, there would be no state. It was absolutely marked off from the Proudhonists and the Mazzinists. The Commune precipitated these differences into active demarcation. The strongest quarrel was waged between Bakuninist anarchists and Marxists, wherein the latter won in all the Congresses of the International and the Bakuninists were expelled in 1872 at the Hague Congress. But this was not the real cause of the break-up of the International which could have continued to work with greater vigour, with the disappearance of non-Marxist elements. The real cause, as noted above, is the change in the material conditions of the workers and the objective situation which grew less favourable for a proletarian revolution as Capitalism ascended and grew.

The achievements of the First International were mainly amalgamations of National Socialist Parties into a centralised body and building a revolutionary Marxist basis for them. It also introduced International Trade Union Unity. The General Council resolution of 1866 on the Austro-Prussian War, directed that the

national was must be used by the workers for advancement of their struggle for emancipation. The Lausanne resolution of 1867 said that wars are not prevented merely by the abolition of the army but it requires a change in the social system. The Brussels resolution of 1868 recommended that "workers down tools in case of war breaking out in their countries, for war today is civil war, workers fighting against workers." This famous attitude was adopted by the Second International but betrayed by it in the imperialist war of 1914. And it is the same attitude which is being insisted upon by the Communist Parties of the world today. (Reference Ex. P. 527.)

After the dissensions of the Bakuninists assumed an acute form and they were expelled, and the other parties, especially the British Trade Unions, grew cold, the Headquarters of the International were transferred to New York. After two years it was disbanded in 1874.

The revolutionary philosophy of the working-class which was formulated from the "existing class-struggle, from a movement going on before our very eyes", and which was tried, tested and enriched by the revolutionary experiences of the workers of 1848-51 and of 1871 received the most brilliant and profound expression in the works of Marx and Engels. The theory of class-struggle was already advocated before them. But the fundamental proposition of historical materialism was Marx's own discovery, as also the theory of surplus value. Side by side with the organisation work carried on by Marx he supplied the movement with the rare production of his genius, which carried Socialism from a realm of utopianism on to a scientific basis. Marx's outstanding works are the "Manifesto" (1847)—Ex. P. 21; "The Critique of Political Economy", (1859); "Capital" (1867, 1885, 1894)—Ex. P. 455; "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (1851)—Ex. P. 1193—D 408; "The Civil War in France" (1871)—Ex. P. 1179—D 409. Engels collaborated with Marx in many of his writings. The work "Revolution and Counter-revolution" which goes in the name of Marx was written by Engels. Engels edited the two volumes of "Capital" after Marx's death. He also wrote the most popular exposition of Communism, "The anti-Duhring" (1877) when the German Professor Duhring

who, though blind, was a brilliant and learned author, had undertaken the work of smashing Marxism. Engels' most original study is the "Peasant war in Germany"—(Ex. P. 1183—D 407). Both in their life had become the acknowledged leaders of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. Marxism had become the basis to which most of the parties in Europe were veering.

#### **42. Founding of the Second International—its period—war and the Second International**

The disbanding of the First International did not mean the break-down of the working-class Socialist Parties or their international alliance. Some sort of international contact was maintained by the Bakuninists, who, when expelled from the first International after its disbanding, continued to hold International Conferences, calling themselves the real First International. These Conferences ceased in 1881 on the death of Bakunin and the ebb of anarchism in the Continental countries, due to the growth of class consciousness amongst the workers and all the Socialist Parties. Each country was building a strong Socialist Party of its own, the strongest being the Social Democratic Party of Germany, which was declared illegal by Bismark in 1879. It continued to function, issued a newspaper from Switzerland, scored heavily at the elections and was legalised in 1890 when Bismark was removed. The socialist organisation of the German working-class was far ahead of the other countries and remained so far a long time till the Russian Communist Party outstripped it. In England the Social Democratic Federation was formed in 1881, the Fabian Society in 1885, the Socialist League in 1885 and the Independent Labour Party in 1893. In 1889 on 14th July fell the 100th Anniversary of the capture of Bastille, the first rising of the workers which began the French Revolution. On this occasion delegates from all the Socialist Parties assembled in Paris for the celebration of the anniversary and it was decided to form the Second International. There it was also decided that "at a definite moment a wide scale international demonstration is to be organised in such a way that in all countries and all towns simultaneously on a definite date the workers submit to the State Power the demand for the introduction of the eight hours day and proclaim aloud the other decisions of the International Paris Congress". (References Ex. P. 2491.)

The American Federation of Labour had fixed the 1st of May 1890 for such a demonstration even before this Congress had met, so the Second International adopted that date. Thus the May Day came into existence. It is not a day of merriment but a day of demonstration of the International class solidarity of the Proletariat, a day to summarise each year's experiences of the class-struggle and to formulate and propagate the demands of the Proletariat. (References P. 2491.)

The Second International was born in a period when the national bourgeoisie of the big capitalist powers was partitioning the world amongst themselves, and bringing the loot to the home countries. On the basis of this colonial loot, the bourgeoisie succeeded in bribing sections of workers with high wages and ameliorations. It resulted in deflecting the working-class on to a policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and renouncing the path of class-struggle. The Trade Union struggle for partial demands, for less hours and higher wages, for Parliamentary suffrage became the leading issues before the workers. The effect of this was that a tendency arose to "revise" the revolutionary side of Marxism. The "Revision Movement" was undertaken by Bernstein, an engineer and a brilliant pupil of Engels, who, at the time of his death, had entrusted all his library and papers to Bernstein. Bernstein belonged to the German Party, was exiled by Bismark, went to stay in England after a short stay in other countries, and remained there for several years. While there he came under the influence of the British bourgeoisie and the aristocracy of Labour which had become "responsible" and "reasonable" by the share in the colonial loot. The cardinal point of the "Revisionists" was that it was not necessary, after all, for the working-class to seize and smash the bourgeois State by a violent revolution. A gradual transformation through the Parliamentary and other institutions would do the task; "co-operate with the bourgeoisie," "industrial peace" etc. were naturally the slogans of the new pseudo-Marxists and Socialists. The worst danger was that they justified all this by reference to Marxism itself.

The Second International became a loose Federation of all sorts of Socialists, who were agreed that capitalist society should be



superseded by Socialist society and that the political struggle was a necessity for the workers. It is interesting to note that amongst the adherents of the Second International in India, who have, since the growth of the Communist Movement, found themselves suddenly in love with the Second International or the Indian National Congress, there are several groups, who would not like the workers in India "to dabble in politics". But the Second International in 1891 and 1893 emphasised the importance of the political struggle, and debarred organisations which did not recognise this from entering it. But having no really Marxist or revolutionary basis, the individual sections deteriorated, and in France the "Socialists" Millerand joined the French Ministry of the Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet. This was the first betrayal by a National Socialist Party and created a storm in the Socialist Parties of the world. The Paris Conference of 1900 and Amsterdam Conference of 1904 by a majority decided that Socialists should not join a bourgeois Government but those who had already done so refused to resign. So in 1904 Millerand, Viviani and Briand were expelled. In 1907, at the Stuttgart Congress the opportunists moved that the Trade Unions should not be controlled by Social Democratic Parties, thus trying to rescue the mass organisations from the direction of their revolutionary sections organised into party. The increasing hunt for colonies and the clashes of the imperialist powers over them, the trustification of industry and friction arising from international cartels and their division of the world into reserved markets, led to threats of war and a tremendous increase in militarism. The war danger became very imminent by 1912 when an international crisis threatened Imperialism. The crisis was getting more and more acute since 1910 and England was in the grip of a big strike wave. The reason was that while the period before 1900 was one of falling prices the growth of monopoly in all its forms had checked that tendency and prices were rising steadily from 1900 to 1910 leading to a fall in real wages. In England the seamen and dockers struck in 1911 and won. They were followed by the railwaymen. 1912 saw a great miners' strike. In 1913 the Dublin capitalists locked out their workers. It was followed by a building workers' strike in 1914. If the War had not broken out, 1914 would have seen a tremendous All National General Strike with revolutionary consequences in England.

The workers in Russia who had been suppressed after the revolution of 1905 had begun to rise again with the Lena Gold-Fields massacre. The atmosphere was filled with the talk of war and strikes.

What was the reaction of the Second International to this rising revolutionary wave? The International had already failed to keep the Social Democrats from joining bourgeois Government, because joining a bourgeois Government means aiding the bourgeois State in its function of suppressing the working-class. When War was threatened the International in its Congress at Stuttgart (1907) and Copenhagen (1910) considered the question and betrayed its opportunist character. The Left Wing at this Congress headed by Keir Hardie of the British Labour Movement and Vaillant, a French Socialist (not the Bakuninist anarchist) advocated that if a war broke out, the workers of all countries should immediately declare a General Strike as the war would be a war of imperialists. This proposal was rejected by 131 to 51. The International abandoned its character of an International of workers and left its Parties to fight for their own bourgeoisie in case of war.

#### **43. What it did when war actually broke out—the role of the Labour Party—the vote for war credits in Germany**

When the War actually broke out the Socialist deputies of the Second International, sitting in the Parliaments of their respective countries, voted for the war credits. All the talk of preventing war by a General Strike or by any other means "most appropriate" was thrown overboard. The Socialists of the Second International led the workers to fight the battles of their bourgeoisie. The heritage of the First International, the lessons of the Paris Commune, of Marxism, were forgotten, and the betrayal was great because the Second International influenced a membership of 12 millions from 27 countries. The International crisis threatening Capitalism was jumped over by the war. The patriotic mania, the supposed danger of being wiped away from the face of the earth that was held by the bourgeoisie of each warring nation before its workers and peasants, the false propaganda of the bourgeois Press and the co-operation of the leaders of the working-class with the bourgeoisie, set aside the strike wave, the militant action of the

working-class against the capitalist system, in the belief that the war would solve the problem of poverty. The working-class and peasantry of each nation was led to believe that the defeat of the bourgeoisie of its enemy would mean victory for itself. The exploitation of India at present is being directed in the interest of British Imperialism by the so-called Labour Party. The Indian bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois intellectuals grasped the imperialist nature of this "Labour Party" only when it hit them by an ordinance in 1924, and its policy in 1929 and 1930. But the Communists have exposed the opportunist and imperialist role of the Labour Party since the War, when it joined hands with the imperialists of its country. When Austria declared war on July 25, 1914, the Parliamentary Labour Party expressed its gratification at the "peace efforts" of Sir Edward Grey and asked all Labour organisations "to watch events vigilantly so as to oppose if need be in the most effective way any action which may involve us in war". On August 1, the Brist section of the Bureau of the Second International issued a manifesto over the signatures of Keir Hardie and Arthur Henderson calling upon Labour to hold vast demonstrations against war in every industrial centre. "Combine and conquer the Militarist enemy. Down with class rule." Two days after this the British bourgeoisie declared war. The anti-war resolution of the Second International at Basle called for every means to prevent war, having regard to the sharpness of class-struggle and the general political situation. What was the position of the class-struggle in England at this time? Mr. Sydney Webb, now the bulwark of Imperialism, says, "The number of disputes culminated in the later half of 1913 and the first half of 1914 in the outbreak of something like 150 strikes per month. British Trade Unionism was, in fact, in the summer of 1914 working up for an almost revolutionary outburst of gigantic industrial disputes which could not have failed to be seriously embarrassing for the political organisation to which the movement had committed itself, when in August 1914 war was declared and all internal conflicts had perforce to be suspended". Webb omits to mention that the suspension was not voluntarily done by British Labour but under the false leadership of its Labour-imperialists. The Basle resolution declared that, "should the war none the less break out, every effort must be made to utilise the crisis and hasten the fall of capitalist domination." The leadership of the British

workers failed to carry this out. On 7th August 1914 the Labour Party decided to make no pronouncement on the vote of war credits. August 29, the E.C. of the Party "agreed with the policy of the Parliamentary Party in joining the campaign to strengthen the British Army," and promised the support of its organisations! The betrayal was made complete by sending the Secretary to the Party, Mr. Arthur Henderson, to enter the Cabinet in July 1915. On August 24, the Trade Union Congress, the General Federation of Trade Unions and the Labour Party decided to terminate all the existing trade disputes. Fearing that the workers would denounce them, they also cancelled the T.U.C. Session. In March 1915 the T.U. leaders entered into an agreement with Lloyd George by which the workers surrendered every right of theirs. Holidays and the eight-hour-work day were abrogated, employment of women and children in mines was introduced, all former wage agreements were suspended and the workers were not to get even overtime pay or compensatory allowance for all these sacrifices to Imperialism. (Webb's History of Trade Unionism). The Munitions of War Act of 1915 prevented a worker from leaving his work without the consent of the employer. The result was that wholesale robbery of workers' wages was practised by the employers and if they protested, they were sent to the Army.

The Indian bourgeoisie draws a different lesson from this. It asks the Indian workers and peasants to emulate the patriotism and self-sacrifice of the British workers in stopping class war when threatened by an enemy from outside. But it fails to mention the role of the British bourgeoisie. It was the workers who were killed on the battle-field. On the economic field it was the workers who bore the war burden. The bourgeoisie bought war bonds and is even now after 12 years living on the interest. The war was profiteers in every country are well-known to the workers. The bourgeoisie in every country reaped a harvest of wealth from the war while the workers were thrown in the harvest of tornadoes of high prices, disease and massacres.

It is wrong to suppose that British workers did not strike for wages during the patriotic war. The engineers, miners, armament workers, all had to strike for higher wages as the prices were rising. The employers called for Government intervention but the

workers refused to be intimidated and in some cases they won. The Clyde workers, in a manifesto, denounced the Trade Union officials' support to the Government as "an act of treachery to the working-class". With the sanction of the treacherous leadership the workers' leaders in the armament works were deported in March-April 1916. Thus throughout 1915 and 1916 the workers were carrying on class war on the industrial front, while the bourgeoisie and the opportunist Second International leadership of the British Labour Party, the I.L.P. and the T.U.C. were co-operating against the British workers to carry out an imperialist war. It was the natural outcome of becoming renegade to Imperialism. (References Exh: P. 1270, "The Communist", January 1928).

The social democratic deputies in the Reichstag voted for war credits. The French deputies did the same. In Russia the Duma copied the betrayal. The International solidarity of labour against the bourgeoisie was forgotten.

**44. Attitude of Communists to war—Lenin's slogans—the work of Leibknecht and Rosa Luxembourg—the perversion of Lenin's slogans by the Social Democrats**

But was there none in that huge organisation of 12 million workers of 27 countries to oppose the war, to denounce it and give the correct Communist lead to the working-class of the world? Was none so courageous and faithful as to stand out in that international fever of patriotism fanned by the Imperialist Press in every country and give the slogan of the Proletarian Revolution? There was, and it was the small Left-Wing section of the Second International under the leadership of Lenin, Luxembourg and Leibknecht. We have already seen the revolutionary attitude to war as indicated by Marx and the First International. The same attitude was endorsed by the Second International, but whereas the Paris Commune carried out its revolutionary duty, the Second International failed to do so. The attitude of the Communist of the Third International to the question of war is a continuation of the Marxist attitude and a continuation of the Leninist preaching during the last imperialist war.

The Leninist attitude to war is determined from the class point of view. Is the war waged in the interest of the working-class by the revolutionary working-class? Is the war a progressive one leading to a further unfolding of the class-struggle or is it reactionary? For example, the wars waged by the bourgeoisie in the 18th and 19th centuries were progressive wars. Because they were wars waged by the bourgeoisie against the absolute feudal order, thus leading to the development of Capitalism, the development of productive forces and of the Proletarian struggle bringing the whole epoch nearer to the fight for Socialism. The war waged by the Indian or the Chinese bourgeoisie would be a progressive war in the same sense.

But the war of 1914 was a reactionary war. It was a war of imperialist powers, who fought in order to destroy the productive forces of one another, as there was no room for further expansion or growth. An imperialist war signifies the end of the progressive growth of Capitalism and is therefore a sequel for proletarian revolution. It shows decline, not progress. This has been amply proved by the post-war experience. In Europe, the France-German War was the last *national* war. Today in the world, the wars waged by the colonies for Independence from the imperialist yoke can be said to be progressive national wars. So also the war waged by the Proletarian Soviet State against an imperialist State would be a revolutionary progressive war.

In the second address of the First International to the workers, Marx therefore asked the workers to do their duty as *citizens*, but at the same time to consolidate their position as *workers*. In 1848, he also advised a war against Russian Czarism, in order to weaken the reactionary feudal forces, which every time suppressed the progressive forces of the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry and workers from developing. But the same position did not remain in 1914 when German and Russian imperialisms fought each other. Because now both of them were ripe for being overthrown and there could be no preference. The productive forces in both had reached their maximum within the bourgeois structure and could be pushed further only by being liberated from the shackles of private ownership. Hence Communists oppose the imperialist war

but support the revolutionary war of one proletarian State against the bourgeois State, or of the colonies against their imperialist masters or of workers against the bourgeoisie. Our anti-war attitude is not that of Pacifists or humanitarians; it is a class attitude. The Social Democrats in the Second International failed to see this. Outwardly every imperialist State called the war one of "defence". But in fact every imperialist State wanted to destroy the other; with the net result that one Imperialism is substituted for another, other one reaction for another reaction. It was not a question of substituting feudalism by Capitalism or Capitalism by Socialism.

There were some sections of Social Democrats, who took the slogan of "Neither peace nor war". This attitude also was wrong. If the war was reactionary it had to be opposed. Such an opposition could not be neutrality like that of the Pacifists. "When the bourgeois State forced the working-class to fight its war, the opposition to the fight could only be a civil war. This was the attitude adopted by the revolutionary wing of the Second International under the leadership of Lenin. The Social Democratic Labour Party of Russia in its manifesto in November 1914 said: "It is the task of the Social Democrats in every country to wage in the first and foremost place a fight against Chauvinism in their respective countries. The overthrow of Czarism, the United States of Europe, erected on the ruins of Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian monarchies, the Socialist Revolution in the advanced countries, the Democratic Revolution in Russia, were to be the aims of the struggle. The transformation of the imperialist war into civil war, such was to be the road." On 15th July 1915 writing in the "Social Democrat", the paper of the Russian Party, Lenin wrote "During a reactionary war the revolutionary class cannot but desire the defeat of its own Government". (Reference P. 2391). "Revolution in war time is Civil War and the transformation of the war of States into a civil war is facilitated by military failures (defeat) on the part of the Government of the States. It is in fact impossible to bring about such a transformation without encouraging defeat." (Ex P. 247 page 58). Against the imperialist slogan of "Save your country," the Bolshevik slogan was "Welcome defeat—" "Change imperialist war into civil war."

Anybody who has lived through the war craze can see what tremendous revolutionary courage was required to stand in the centre of Europe and issue such a slogan when even the mightiest Second International leaders had joined on the side of the war in their respective countries.

The imperialists tried to pervert the slogan. In Russia they argued that Lenin wanted Germany to be victorious. But this was not so. The slogan was to be acted upon by the workers in every country. So there could not be a question of wishing the victory of one Imperialism as against another. Some Social Democrats formulated the question that if the workers and peasants of one country, misled by its bourgeoisie, did attack another, where the workers were not in a position to overthrow their bourgeoisie, should these social democrats simply see their workers and peasants massacred? The answer is that whatever be the position of the party it cannot support its bourgeoisie in the war. It must oppose it. Secondly the attack on the bourgeoisie affects the bourgeois State, which is bound to arm the workers and peasants for the war. So the question of impotent massacre is ruled out by the bourgeoisie itself. The Party has to utilise this position, overthrow its bourgeoisie and then, if peace becomes impossible, to conduct a revolutionary war. That is what the Russian Social Democrats—the Bolsheviks—did.

The Social Democratic members of the Russian Duma refused to sanction war credits—the Bolsheviks were not opportunists like the Labour Party. In Germany the banner of revolt was led by Liebknecht, in the German Reichstag. At the first voting, he was led by the idea of party discipline and as the German Social Democrats had decided to vote for war, Liebknecht obeyed the mandate. But later he rebelled and in March 1915 he voted against war. He was immediately drafted as a common soldier in the army. Exactly the Leninist attitude was taken by the great Irish leader James Connolly, who was not in touch with Lenin at all. Connolly advocated that the Irish workers must begin the war of national Independence immediately, taking advantage of the imperialist carnage. The most consistent and virulent opposition was organised by the Bolsheviks in Russia and Liebknecht and



Rosa Luxembourg in Germany. At first the British, French and Russian imperialists applauded the "German" Liebknecht and Luxembourg for taking up the slogan of "Civil War". The German imperialists cheered the "Russian" Bolsheviks for advocating the overthrow of Czarism. Thus the imperialists of every warring country wanted to use the Communists in the enemy countries for their own victory. While the Communists in all the imperialist countries wanted to unite, internationally for the overthrow of all the bourgeois States by using their mutual military conflict.

#### **45. Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences—proposal of founding the Third International—the Russian Revolution**

For three years the struggle did not bear fruit. The masses had not yet been convinced by their own experience of the correctness of the Bolshevik lead. Without such an experience, the finest theory and leadership falls flat. For two years the Left Wing of the Second International could do nothing except issuing manifestoes to the workers, forming propaganda centres wherever possible and organising fractions. The greatest work in this direction was carried on by Liebknecht in Germany and the Leninists in Russia. Within the Second International a revolutionary Left Wing had been growing since 1907 under the leadership of Lenin and Luxembourg. In 1910 they tried to organise a Conference of the revolutionary Left Wing but did not succeed as the members were afraid of the powerful International throwing them out. In the quarrel between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, the International sided with the Mensheviks. After the war, opportunism became still more vivid. So when a Conference was held at Zimmerwald in September 1915, the Leftists formed the Zimmerwald Left and issued a manifesto against the war calling upon the workers to turn the imperialist war into a civil war. Both at Zimmerwald and Kienthal the Left were not in a majority. Though they were not full Congresses of the Second International yet they were congresses for all purposes of its adherent. At these conferences, Lenin brought forward a proposal of founding the Third International. Every one except a few members considered it a mad proposal. It was unthinkable that any one

could propose a Third International against the most powerful Second International of twelve million members. Even within the Russian Bolshevik Party the proposal was considered to be too radical. Lenin wanted the Party to break with the Zimmerwald platform and form a Third International. The majority opposed and the Bolsheviks remained in the Second International. According to Zinovieff, the nucleus of the Comintern was begun since 1907, the proposal made openly in 1915 and carried out in March 1919, after the Russian and German Revolutions. Three years of the imperialist war convinced the workers that "one's enemy is in one's own country". That the imperialist war must be turned into the civil war.

The exhaustion was felt first in the country which was the least strong in its organisation, where the imperialist chain was the weakest and the workers' revolutionary party strongest. It was Russia. The shortage of bread, the mismanagement of munitions at the front exasperated the workers and soldiers until the revolutionary tide could not be stemmed. The Czar was overthrown and a provisional Government was established in March, 1917. The tide was rising in Germany also. On 28th June 1916, 50,000 workers in Berlin struck work for Liebknecht's release. Next day Brunswick joined it. It was the first political strike in Germany. But the revolution there took time to mature. It was one year after the Russian Revolution that the Kaiser fled on 9th November 1918.

The two Russian Revolutions of 1917 and the subsequent revolutions in the Central European countries were the direct outcome of the imperialist war. But in the former, there was a party and a proletariat schooled in the experiences of the revolution of 1905. In the latter, there was no such party nor a proletariat that had gone through a revolutionary baptism, showing it the treacherous role of the pseudo-revolutionary petty-bourgeois parties. Moreover the Russian proletariat had the unique fortune of possessing the extraordinary genius of Lenin. The Russian imperialist system was not so strong as the German or British. These and other factors gave birth to a successful proletarian revolution in Russia, while the proletarian revolutions

and revolutionary attempts in other countries were betrayed and drowned in blood.

The Russian Revolution ushers in an epoch of proletarian revolutions and the emancipatory wars of the colonies. The Russian Revolution has been inspiring the world revolutionary movement of the workers for the last thirteen years. We stand here charged with advocating the same ideals and the same methods as were used by the Russian working-class and peasantry in their fight against Czarism and Capitalism. Every bourgeois leader in India today tries to frighten British Imperialism with the prospect of the Indian Bolsheviks getting stronger if Dominion Status were not given to the Indian bourgeoisie. There is a worldwide war against the Bolsheviks. We will therefore see what the Russian experience teaches us and what lessons we draw from it for the proletarian struggle in India.

D/- 5-11-31.

### **SECTION 3.—The Russian Phase of the class-struggle from 1905 to 5-Year Plan: Paras 46-66**

#### **46. Early Russian developments till 1905**

The development of Capitalism began in Russia later than in England, France and Germany. While Europe and America as a whole were going swiftly on the road of capitalist development, the peasant was still a serf in Russia. The incapacity of feudal economy to compete with products of capitalist economy, the effects of the Crimean war and such other factors compelled the Czar to decree the abolition of serfdom in 1861. But the "abolition" was such that the peasant had literally to buy his freedom. If he wanted to cultivate his land as an independent peasant, the feudal lord demanded a price that he could never pay, or if he could pay, he was given such a piece that he had to hire himself out to the landlord for more money as the small piece was insufficient to meet his needs. Thirty years after the emancipation, the peasants were still being flogged and sold as serfs. However, a certain stratum of small peasants and "free"

labour was created. A part of the peasantry when completely ruined went to the town industry.

The republican ideas of the French Revolution had their influence upon the small middle-class in Russia. Discontent against the Czarist system grew amongst them. When many of them, tired with the conditions in Russia, went abroad for education and "Western" acquirements, they came in contact with the adherents of Marx and Bakunin, and imbibed their teachings, especially of the latter. The Russian intelligentsia was already filled with the Slavophil mania, that is the notion that the Russian Slavs have a special message to give to the world (just like the Indian Rabindra Nath Tagore and Gandhi wandering about to give the "special message" of India to the world). There was prevalent in Russia the "Mir," an ancient system by which land was held in common by the village. The intelligentsia idealised the "Mir," idealised the peasants. The whole literary activity of the eighteen-sixties was full of an idealisation of the peasants. Bakunin gave the slogan "To the people. Go amongst the peasantry, teach them, do good work for them and society will be cured of all ills including Czarism." One of the advocates of this movements, Pisarev, added one more slogan—that the intelligentsia must undergo the same physical inconveniences as the peasantry, as a means for genuine approximation to the people. The Czar fearing the growth of revolutionary tendencies amongst the immigrant students called them back and threatened banishment if they did not return. They came back and went to the "people", started schools, became doctors, teachers and preachers and began to mildly stir up the peasants. Even this peaceful welfare work was not tolerated by the Czar. The natural reaction was that they determined to leave "peace and welfare" and take to the road of violent terrorism. Terrorist activity was at its height during the period of 1870-80, its greatest action being the assassination of the Czar Alexander II in 1881. The reaction of the Government to this was an increase in the secret Police force (the Okhrana) from whose operations even the members of the royal family were not left free. According to Masaryk, the average duration of the life of the Russian terrorist was two years. During the years 1860-92 the

number of victims of the terrorist revolution is stated to have been 30,000 (Masaryk, "Spirit of Russia", Volume II). The presiding genius of Russian anarchism was Bakunin. It was not the anarchism as we find it in India, the only factor common between the two being the name and terrorist attack against the members of the bureaucracy. Bakunin's mature philosophy was summed up in two words "against God and the State". Russian anarchism was atheistic, while the Indian is crudely superstitious religious and even communal. The Russian anarchists were in fact anarcho-Communists, i.e. they wanted to abolish immediately the State, and institute Socialism something of the Mir type. Therefore they asked for "Land and Freedom," of which only the latter is heard amongst the so-called Indian anarchists.

The absence of any outlet for the middle-class intelligentsia in industries, the absence of liberal bourgeois Parliamentary institutions, combined with monstrous rigour of repression, made Bakuninist anarchism strong. But when during the latter part of the 19th century, Capitalism began to develop in Russia, conditions altered. A stable Proletariat began to grow and with it the influence of Marxism also. In 1883, Plekhanov, Vera Zasulitch and Axelrod formed the first Communist Group that began popularising and applying to Russian conditions the theory of Marxism. These pioneers of Communism in Russia were drawn from the disillusioned ranks of the "Populists" (as the anarchists were called because of their slogan "To the people"). By 1895 there were three political groups contending for the leadership of the movement—one was the liberal bourgeoisie only supplicating for a constitution; second, the Populist socialists advocating destruction of autocracy and feudalism to be followed by a return to the old social life of the village Commune; third, the Social Democrats or Communists whose ultimate aim was a Communist society and immediate demands were the overthrow of Czarism, destruction of feudalism, a Constituent Assembly and the minimum demands of the workers in fact on bourgeois democracy such as was obtainable in Western Europe.

Russian Capitalism grew very rapidly between 1890 and 1900, whereas the rate of increase in the other countries was slowing down and they were hunting for division of the world market. The

impetus to this production was given by the growth of railways which were needed for the movement of the grain trade of the land owners. Railways which were 1488 versts in 1860 increased to 41714 by 1900. Along with them rose allied industries. The cheapness of labour brought in French and German capital. The development took place mostly on large scale production, from the very beginning, as it was built on the technical experiences of the Western bourgeoisie.

But side by side with this development there existed, unlike France or England, the all-powerful land-owning class whose parasitic demand of rent did not allow the growth of a middle peasantry but impoverished the whole strata. Between 1888 and 1898 in 50 provinces of European Russia the number of horses owned by the peasants declined from 19.6 millions to 17 millions and cattle from 34.6 millions to 24.5 millions. The peasantry was destitute, cruelly exploited, flogged and shot for disobedience or refusal to do any serf labour. Its condition can be compared with that of our peasantry under the Talukdars of Oudh. The growth of industry on the one hand and complete ruination of the peasantry on the other was bound to lead to the depression in trade and industry which set in at the beginning of 1900 and lasted in a more or less degree till 1910 and was the cause of the revolutionary upheavals slowly breaking out in 1901 and culminating in the revolutionary of 1905. (References P. 247).

#### **47. Rise of various parties—Economists, Anarchists, Social Democrats etc.**

Petrograd was the first centre of railways and industry and therefore the first of strikes also, which had begun as early as 1875. With the development of Capitalism, the Proletariat began to appear on the scene as a separate force and claim attention from the revolutionary schools of thought. The Marxian viewpoint found adherents amongst the intelligentsia through the activities of the Plekhanov group. But Communist thought was as yet confined merely to the intellectuals and had not yet become the basis of Proletarian struggle. This was the first task carried out by Lenin. The economic struggle of the workers for wages and hours

with their employers had attracted many intellectuals to the industrial centres for conducting the workers' movement and amongst them had sprung up various shades of thought. The activity of even the most mild welfare workers being forbidden by the Czarist Police, most of these circles were secret and Lenin worked amongst one of them. He had mastered Marxian economics and political theory in his college days and was already under Police surveillance, his brother having been hanged for an anarchist attempt on the Czar. Lenin was a great admirer of the revolutionaries of the preceding epoch, their courage, methods of organisation and sacrifices. But he was convinced of the petty-bourgeois nature and the futility of their struggle, and he exposed their reactionary Socialism, which wanted to return to the pre-capitalist and feudal State in which Russia had been rotting so far. He began this with his articles "The heritage we renounce" and "The friends of the people—who are they"?

The depression in industry brought on a strike wave. Lenin had not remained content with merely exposing the horrible conditions of work of the workers. His circle while secretly circulating leaflets on workers' demands and exposing abuses explained to them that the solution of the evil lay not *only* in economic struggle, but that the overthrow of autocracy and a social revolution alone could finally solve the problem.

Now there were in Russia Marxists-Communists, who believed as Lenin believed, but who did not act up to their belief in the correct manner. By the time that the workers had begun to revolt and the political activity of the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie on constitutional lines was gathering strength, the Communists in Russia found themselves involved in immense ideological and organisational controversies out of which arose Leninism. There were the economists. They considered the economic struggle of the workers as the only and most important struggle. They wanted the movement to be limited to minor demands and improvement of material conditions. Political struggle against autocracy and for democracy they liked to leave to the petty-bourgeoisie. Thus this school though calling itself "Social Democratic or Communist" was like our pure Trade Unionists or Social Welfare

workers of the type illustrated by the Servants of India society or the Servants of the People Society, who send organisers amongst workers for economic struggle, sometimes even with the ideal of Socialist society before them, but who in politics follow the pro-imperialist Liberal Federation or such other institutions. The Socialism of this group consists in vaguely conceiving a socialist society to which the working-class along with the other classes will somehow gradually evolve. The economists laid great emphasis on "spontaneity of the masses." They considered that out of Trade Unions, out of the daily economic struggle, the masses will spontaneously rise to a higher class-consciousness and the needs of the struggle. Next to the economists was one group of Social Democrats or Communists who went a step further than the economists. By all means the working-class must take part in the political struggle. They admitted the Marxian slogan that every class-struggle is a political struggle. But then they conceived it as a "process". The working-class must first carry on "mild politics", the politics arising from Trade Unionism. It must learn by experience what politics is, slowly and step by step. The working-class is incapable, according to them, of building up a revolutionary party at once, or grasping the revolutionary content of the anti-Czarist democratic movement, without a long course of training. Therefore, a Communist, they said, must not incessantly call upon the workers for revolutionary action. This school also took the colour of maintaining the most uncompromising "class outlook". They would not like "the workers to take part in the demonstrations of the petty-bourgeois. They would not like the workers to take part in any democratic movement conducted by the bourgeoisie. On the face of it this looked very Marxian and an unadulterated class outlook. But in fact it hopelessly misunderstood the tactic and strategy of Marxism. The Communist Manifesto had long ago said that a Communist must support every revolutionary movement, even that conducted by the bourgeoisie and use it for his own revolutionary aim. The Leninist line had to fight against all these tendencies and groups. It should be remembered that all these groups were in one party, the Social Democratic Labour Party of



Russia and agreed on one programme, but they differed in its application, in the line of struggle and also in the interpretation of Marxism. All of them relied on Marx just as today in India even the anti-Communist quotes Lenin in his support.

#### **48. Lenin opposes them—"What is to be done"—organisation of professional revolutionaries**

The most exhaustive refutation of the various wrong tendencies in Communism and the first clear formulation of Leninism is to be found in Lenin's work "What is to be done" which he wrote between 1901 and 1902. The outline of thoughts in this booklet had already appeared in the controversial articles of Lenin in the "Iskra". The Social Democratic Party was split into two sections in the Second Congress in 1903, nominally on the question whether or not to have a centralised organisation but really on the question of different tendencies with regard to the revolutionary struggle which later on crystalised into Menshevism and Bolshevism. When the controversies broke out there were Social Democrats of the economist school who said, "Leave controversies of theories, or quarrels between leaders, or exaggeration of the importance of ideology, to the people who are outside Russia, in exile. Here concentrate on the organisation of workers and Trade Unions." Lenin opposed this "freedom" to every tendency taking the lead of the workers' organisation. Because such a freedom ultimately led to chaos and absence of united action. The advocates of "no theoretical quarrels before the workers" (because the workers do not know or care to know what is Moscow and what is Geneva, so say our Indian pseudo-Socialists) quoted even Marx that: "A single step of the real movement is worth a dozen programmes." Lenin pointed out that to repeat these words in the epoch of theoretical chaos is sheer mockery, and if quarrels have to be set aside for the sake of tactical alliances, then you must remember Marx again, who wrote "if you must combine, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not haggle over principles, do not make 'concessions' in theory." The theoretical struggle is absolutely necessary

Writing on the question of spontaneity of the masses Lenin says that the strikes and revolts of the workers ending in destruction of machinery began in Russia in 1870, but they were merely signs of coming consciousness, they were simply trade union struggles. There was no Communist consciousness, that is, the workers were not and could not be conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interest to the whole of the modern political and social system. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without the history of all countries shows that the working-class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, that is, it may itself realise the necessity for combining in unions, to fight against the employers and to strive to compel the Government to pass necessary labour legislation etc. The working-class organisations out of their own evolution can only find the way to trade union politics, which confines itself to bourgeois parliamentary system. The slogan of giving the "economic struggle a political character" as a tactical slogan of using the trade union struggle to infuse Communist consciousness and convert that politics into the revolutionary politics of Communism looks most profound and alluring. But such a conversion is not possible by limiting the movement to the economic sphere only. It must spread over all forms of social life-taking note of the struggle of all classes and their alignments. The workers can acquire class political consciousness *only from without*, that is only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between the workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationship between *all* classes and the State and the Government—the sphere of the inter-relations between all classes. For that reason the reply to the question what must be done in order that the workers may acquire political knowledge cannot be merely one which in the majority of cases the practical workers, especially those who are inclined towards economism, usually content themselves with, that is "go amongst the workers." To bring political knowledge to the workers the social democrats (Communists) must go among all classes of the

population, must despatch the units of their army in all directions. The Communist ideal should not be a trade union secretary but a *tribune of the people*, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place, no matter what stratum or class of people it affects.

But the widening of the field of struggle is likely to lead to another deviation in the field of organisation—one is likely to attempt to convert a whole trade union into a "party" and neglect the question of revolutionary organisation. In the zeal to widen the movement a criticism is made that unless the rank and file take part, the continuity cannot be maintained; when a handful of leaders are arrested, the whole movement comes to an end. Lenin admitted the correctness of the description of the state of affairs. But the lesson that his critics drew that the masses must take the movement "out of the hands of revolutionary leaders—the workers must rely on workers, on the rank and file only and not on a set of ten wise men", was mischievous and demagogic. It was an attempt to set the worst instinct of the crowd against the "leaders." Lenin fought this. "A Committee of students is no good, it is not stable," the critics said. "Quite good," said Lenin, "but the conclusion to be drawn from this is that we must have a Committee of professional revolutionists, and it does not matter whether a student or a worker is capable of qualifying himself as a professional revolutionist. The conclusion that you draw however, (like some of the Indian comrades who favour debarring intellectuals from holding trade union posts and restricting the posts to workers exclusively) is that the working-class must not be pushed from outside. I would like to ask what is meant by the students "pushing on" the workers. All it means is that the students being to the workers the fragments of political knowledge they possess, the crumbs of socialist ideas they have managed to acquire. Such pushing on from outside can never be too excessive; on the contrary so far there has been too little of it in our movement; we have been stewing in our own juice far too long. We have bowed down far too slavishly before the spontaneous "economic struggle" of the workers against the employers and Government". Next to the theory, the question of organisation is most important. In this the wide organisation of

workers like trade unions must not be confused with the organisation of revolutionists which is the *party*. On this his view may be summarised thus:—(1) that no movement can be durable without a stable organisation of leaders to maintain continuity—(2) that the more widely the masses are drawn into the struggle and form the basis of the movement, the more necessary is it to have such an organisation and the more stable must it be (for it is much easier than for demagogues to side-track the most backward masses), (3) That the organisation must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolution as a profession, (4) That in a country with despotic Government the more we restrict the membership of this organisation to persons who are engaged in revolution as a profession and who have been trained, the better will it be for the safety of the organisation, (5) the wider will be the circle of men and women of the working-class or of other classes of society able to join the movement and perform active work in it. The centralisation of the secret functions of the organisation does not mean the centralisation of all functions of the movement, neither does it mean violation of democracy within the party. Applying the conclusion that he drew to himself and his comrades Lenin wrote "the most grievous sin that we have committed in regard to organisation is that by our primitiveness we have lowered the prestige of revolutionists in Russia. A man who is weak and vacillating on theoretical questions, who had a narrow outlook, who makes excuses for his own slackness, on the ground that the masses are awakening spontaneously, who resembles a trade union secretary more than a people's tribune, who is unable to conceive a broad and bold plan, who is incapable of inspiring even his enemies with respect for himself, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art, such a man is not a revolutionist but a hopeless amateur. Let no active worker take offence at these frank remarks, for as far as insufficient training is concerned I apply them first and foremost to myself. I used to work in a circle that set itself a great and all embracing task and every member of that circle suffered to the point of torture from the realisation that we were proving ourselves to be amateurs at a moment in history when we might have been able to

say—paraphrasing a well-known epigram "give us an organisation of revolutionists and we shall overturn the whole of Russia". And the more I recall the burning sense of shame I then experienced, the more bitter are my feelings towards those pseudo social democrats whose teachings bring disgrace on the calling of a revolutionist, who fail to understand that our task is not to degrade the revolutionist to the level of an amateur but to exalt the amateur to the level of a revolutionist."

The programme of spreading Communist consciousness to all, of taking the lead of every real revolutionary struggle had its dangers also, to which Lenin paid careful attention. The question of alliances with non-Communist parties for tactical purposes, to set the broadest strata of the masses in a revolutionary motion, brought forth the danger of the real Marxian principles getting adulterated at the hands of the petty-bourgeois adherents. To overcome this and to guarantee the organisation of revolutionists from being swamped by opportunists, Lenin advocated alliances with non-Marxist parties and groups only in separate concrete instances for a limited purpose with the proviso that the party was at complete liberty to criticise and expose the ideological differences between the party and its ally. Secondly, the alliances took place not between individuals but between the party as a whole and the ally, that is the party did not merge into or become the organic member of the other body but retained its identity and separate command in all spheres. This method worked very well, so much so that in the several alliances that the Bolsheviks formed with other parties, though for a time they looked as if they were compromising or losing hold, they came out successful, and stronger than before. The Bolsheviks split from the Mensheviks in the Second Congress and built up their revolutionary organisation. When in the rising wave after 1902, the Czarist autocracy attacked even the most moderate bourgeois liberals, as were found in the *Zemstvos*, the "Iskra" goaded the *Zemstvos* to put up a fight; when the students were attacked or drafted into the army as a punishment, the workers were brought to demonstrate in support of them. The Bolshevik organisers were already in the industrial centres and had even reached the army and navy to a small extent.

#### **49. Social Democratic Party organisation—the Zubatov Unions—January 1905—tactics of the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks—announcement of the Duma**

At this time the Police Chief Zubatov advised the Government to start unions of workers through police help—thus keeping the workers under the influence of leaders who would be loyal to the Czar. The Zubatov Unions sprang up in many centres. But the result was that when the workers got organised and strikes arose, the workers amongst whom the Bolsheviks had spread their influence refused the loyalists' lead and took a revolutionary turn. Lenin's line was: "Let Zubatov organise the unions since the Czar would not allow the Bolsheviks to organise one; the Bolsheviks must work amongst these unions on their own lines and, when conflicts arise, win over the workers to their side". The increasing depression in trade and the failure of the Czar in the Russo-Japanese War precipitated a crisis. When the revolutionary atmosphere was being smelt, the question of strategy arose. The Mensheviks said that the revolution would be led by the bourgeoisie against the Czarist feudalism, just as it did in the French and other revolutions of the previous century. The revolution would be bourgeois democratic, that is free the bourgeois productive forces from the feudal fetters. Therefore the workers should only "spur" the bourgeoisie on but without intimidation. ("Just mildly warn them against compromise" as many a petty-bourgeois in India today does in the name of the working-class organisation). They must not "repel" the bourgeoisie, which showed opposition to the Czar. As for the peasantry, it still had faith in the Czar and therefore would not fight against monarchy. The Bolsheviks had quite a different line. The bourgeoisie according to them merely showed imbecile opposition, but it was incapable of revolutionary fight. A few concessions from the Czar and a few thrusts of the class-struggle from the workers would throw it in the arms of Czarism. Therefore the only revolutionary force was the workers. As for the peasantry it could not take the lead, but it was getting revolutionary as its conditions forced it to fight the landowners and hence Czarism. The revolution would be bourgeois democratic, but it would be carried out by the working-class and

the peasantry—not by the bourgeoisie. The political power would be a Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the peasantry. The economic organisation would not be socialist and industry would not be nationalised, but remain private property, but under workers' control. It meant that the owners would have no secrecy of accounts and management, the factory Committee would see how things were done no more than 5.7 per cent net profit would be allowed; and out of this profit, to guarantee expansion and further investments 25 per cent would have to be reinvested in industry. The land would be redistributed amongst the peasantry and landlordism abolished. The Government would be workers' and peasants' Government, without bureaucracy and army, the whole people being armed against the counter-revolution.

On 9th January, 1905 the Czarist police fired on a procession that was going to see the Czar with a petition for democratic rights and a constitution. It was the signal for intense resentment. A wave of strikes spread throughout Russia. Their demands were a Constituent Assembly and an eight hours' day. Czarism was too strong to be defeated by mere strikes, which soon were exhausted. Under the pressure of the movement the Czar appointed a commission to inquire into the reasons of working-class discontent (that should remind as of the Whitley Commission) and asked his Minister Bulygin on 18th February, 1905 to prepare a draft for calling of a Duma with a right of discussion but not of Legislation. A draft did come out in which the workers, nine-tenth of the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie had no vote. These concessions were received with interest though not with satisfaction by the liberal bourgeoisie. But they were repudiated by the workers. The movement was now spreading into the agrarian districts. In the summer of 1905, 14 per cent of all country districts were drawn into the agrarian movement. The movement of the peasantry had not a purely political character just as it had for the workers who now used the weapon of strike for political ends. Political consciousness was to be found in those peasants who had been in the army and navy. The naval disaster in the Russo-Japanese War in May 1905 gave an impetus to the revolution. The revolt of the "Potemkin" shook the belief of the

masses in the absolute power of the Government. It created revolutionary traditions in the army and prepared the way for armed risings. Therefore Lenin wrote several articles on the Potemkin Risings. Just before this the Czar published information about the formation of the Duma. The franchise was to be given to the bourgeoisie and property-holding peasants merchants, big landlords and higher ranks of professors, but not to the workers, poor peasants and poor intellectuals. But the textile strike of Lodz, the barricade fighting, and the Potemkin Rising, the repression and massacres by Government continued and therefore the announcement had not much effect. Still at this time the question of the boycott of the Duma came to the front. The attitude of Lenin on this question has been a subject of reference from a very well renowned social revolutionary in India. During our work we ourselves had been confronted with this problem. Boycott of Councils and Assembly has been a pet thing of Gandhism, irrespective of the situation in the country. The Leninist attitude on this is relative. It is not for or against the boycott of the Duma, councils or parliament per se. In the middle of 1905 he supported boycott of the Bulygin Duma but in 1907 he and the party lifted the boycott of the Duma.

**D/- 6.11.31**

It was not done in order to wring some reforms from Czarism and to compromise with it or for "breaking Czarism from within" as our Indian Assembly heroes would like to put it.

#### **50. Lenin and the boycott of the Duma**

When the character of the Duma was announced the Third Congress of the Union of Unions decided on July 3 to launch a campaign of protest, a few days' strike and demonstrations. It advocated boycott of elections. The party of the Zemstvo constitutionalists, like our bourgeois Liberals Sastri and Sapru type, decided to take part in the elections and formed a party of the Constitutional Democrats or Cadets. This was the Right Wing of the bourgeoisie already on the road to compromise with Czarism. In the Congress of the Zemstvos and urban



municipalities (July 6-8), the majority was for boycott while the Organising Committee was for constitutional monarchy. This was the Left Wing of the bourgeoisie which was thus split into two sections. Amongst the Communists there was a divergence of opinion. The Mensheviks proposed that semi-legal workers' Committees should be formed which in co-operation with the illegal party should make use of the electoral campaign and compel the enfranchised classes through their representatives in the Duma to press for a Constituent Assembly. Further these Committees would hold their own elections, in which quite a network of representative organs of revolutionary Self-Government, crowned by a nationally elected revolutionary Assembly, would be created, which would be dictating its will to all other progressive groups. It was the deceptive tactic of raising "organs of parallel Government" without having first overthrown Czarism and its State. The petty bourgeoisie in India has been toying with such an idea for the last ten years, with deceptive schemes of "parallel Government".

Lenin took stand against both these tactics. The Third Congress of the Party (both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks joining in it), held in London in 1905, had left the question open. So he wrote in the "The Proletari", August 3, 1905 an article headed "The boycott of the Bulygin Duma and insurrection". The Leninist or Marxist formulation of the question was not in the manner of sentimental or moral stupidity, as we find it in Gandhism. The boycott was not decided on the question whether it is moral or immoral to sit in the Duma of the "satanic" Czar. The decision depended on the concrete objective condition—was the insurrection developing or not? What was the Duma in the alignment of class forces? The Duma was "a deal between Czarism and the landlords and the bourgeoisie who for the sake of alleged constitutional doles, absolutely harmless to the autocracy, are gradually to dissociate themselves from the revolution, i.e. from the militant people, and effect a reconciliation with the autocracy. The political position of the bourgeoisie is between the Czar and the people. It desires to play the part of the honest broker and steal into power behind the backs of the fighting people. That is why one day the bourgeoisie

appeals to the Czar and another day to the people. To the former it makes serious and business like proposals for the political deal and to the latter it appeals with high-sounding phrases about liberty. The bourgeoisie in its fight against autocracy is compelled to rouse the political consciousness of the people. We must take advantage of it and sow our theory among the working-class. So when the Left Wing of the bourgeoisie itself is advancing the slogan of a direct fight with the Duma by means of the boycott, the Bolsheviks must support the boycott". "The question of boycott is in itself a question of International bourgeois democracy. The working-class is not directly interested in it except in supporting that section of bourgeois democracy which is most revolutionary." For the purpose Lenin says: "It will be expedient to come to temporary agreements with various groups of revolutionary bourgeois democracy. But in doing this, the class distinction of the Party of the Proletariat must be maintained and the Party must not for a single moment cease Communist criticism to its bourgeois allies. It must advance the slogan of the democratic revolution".

On the proposals of the Mensheviks that workers should elect their own deputies outside the legal elections and form a revolutionary Assembly, he says: "Such slogans are worthless. They represent a confusion of ideas from the point of view of political tasks and serve as grist to the mill of the Loyalists from the point of view of the immediate political situation. The organisation of revolutionary Self-Government, the election of deputies by the people is not a *prologue* but an *epilogue* of the rebellion. To attempt to establish these organisations now, prior to the rebellion and without a rebellion, means to strive after absurd aims and to carry confusion in the minds of the revolutionary Proletariat. To attempt to eclipse the slogan of rebellion by the slogan of organising revolutionary Self-Government or even to push the former into the background is like advising us first to catch a fly and then to stick it on the fly paper".

**51. The October General Strike—December Rising—  
reaction— participation in the Duma—the liquidators**

The growing revolutionary situation threw the Duma into the background. In September another strike wave began, with the economic strike of 6,000 Moscow printers. With them joined the printers of Petersburg. A bakers' strike fought with the soldiers on September 25. On September 20, a conference of railway workers' delegates met in Petersburg for their service grievances. A rumour of its arrest spread and the railway strike began on 7th October. It spread throughout Russia and became the carrier of the great Political General Strike of October. Not a single industrial centre or a large shop or factory was left which had not joined the strike. Economic demands went to the background and the demand of the eight-hour day and Constituent Assembly became the chief demands of the strikers. There were street battles in Kharkov, Odessa and other places. The strike influenced even the liberal landowners, merchants, professors and officials. But though these people took part in the movement the leadership of the fight was taken by the workers. During the strike the Petrograd workers elected a Council of 26 deputies from 100 works. This Council took the name of "Soviet of Workers' Deputies". The name Soviet spread to other centres of the strike where such council. were being formed. The Soviet was the representative fighting organisation of the workers, brought into being when the revolutionary struggle was intensified. Since then the Soviet has become a recognised form of the workers' State. On October 17, the Czar issued a Manifesto sanctioning the rights already seized by the people. But it did not break the strike because no one believed in the promises of the Czar. The workers had to call off the strike on 21st October as they were exhausted. The liberal bourgeoisie was won over by the Czarist Manifesto. It refused to render help to the strikers. The revolutionary phrases disappeared from their speeches and conferences. Five days after the Petersburg workers had to come out in sympathy with the mutiny of the Kronštadi sailors. This time Czarism brought all its military forces to crush the movement. In reply the Soviet decided on November 27 to prepare for an armed uprising. On

December 3, the Petrograd Soviet was arrested. As a result the second Political General Strike began in Petersburg and Moscow on 7th and 8th and developed into a siege and barricade fighting with the troops. The Moscow workers fought for ten days and were defeated on the 18th. Such fights took place in several centres. This was the first armed uprising of the masses.

Even before the echoes of firing had died away the Menshevik leader Plekhanov wrote that the workers had gone too far and they should not have taken to arms. Instead of finding out what was necessary to have made the revolution a success the Mensheviks sabotaged the spirit of the workers. Lenin's deductions were quite different. In answer to Plekhanov he wrote, "To keep from the masses the knowledge that a desperate war of extermination is necessary as a preliminary to our eventual programme, that would be self-deception and false leadership of the people". One of the main causes of the failure of the rising in Moscow was the inadequate revolutionary work done in the Army and one of the chief errors lay in the uncertainty and hesitation of the leaders as to their military and strategic policy. He writes: "The December Rising has confirmed yet another profound saying of Karl Marx which has been forgotten by the opportunists. Marx says that insurrection is an art where the chief quality is a desperate, daring and a resolute offensive. We must not preach passivity or wait inactively for the troops to come to our side. No, we must advocate from the house-tops the need for a daring attack, for an armed uprising, for the extermination of all masters, and for a most active fight to win over the allegiance of the irresolute soldiery. We must apply all the new discoveries of science. Our workers' battalions must be trained for the mass production of bombs, they must be helped to provide themselves with explosives, fuses and automatics." That was Lenin's conception of the lessons of the Moscow insurrection.

*When insurrectionist risings were taking place the Czar passed a new electoral law on December 11 making liberal changes in the August law. By this in many places the middle and petty-bourgeoisie gained ten time more votes. In addition to those of the landed proprietors, peasants and town-dwellers an electoral*

college for workers was also established. The Cadet bourgeoisie was reinforced by these concessions and moved towards the Czar, who on the other hand carried on a ruthless suppression of Trade Unions, radical papers, shot leaders of the workers and sent punitive expeditions into the villages. After the close of the strike wave the Duma was announced to meet on April 27, 1906. But before it could meet, the Czar announced that the Duma would be merely a consultative body. The bourgeoisie accepted it and started the electoral campaign.

The Communists were again confronted with the question of boycott. Both the Bolshevik and Menshevik sections of the Party argued that the halt in the revolutionary wave was temporary (February 1906), that the Duma was a pretence of popular representation and that it was necessary to combat it and prepare for a better insurrection. But the Mensheviks held that the Party should use the first stages of the electoral campaign to rally all the forces of opposition to Government. The Bolshevik section opposed this and wanted the direct continuation of the December line of action. No decision was taken though the majority of both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks were inclined towards boycott. Only in Georgia, where the party was very strong, the Communists swept the elections and got 18 seats. The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sections captured the elections in all other places. The peasantry, which had rallied to the insurrection, was in a mood to see what the Duma could do for it since the insurrection had not been of much help. From the results it was clear that there was no sign of insurrectionary wave, that the opposition had not even been actively expressed in the form of the boycott. So the 4th Stockholm Congress of the Social Democratic Party which was a General Conference of both Bolshevik and Menshevik sections, called off the boycott and decided to form its block in the Duma, and tried to push the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties in the Duma into a definite opposition to the Government. All the Bolsheviks did not favour this but Lenin and a few others voted for the proposal (April 1906). When the first Duma met on 10th May 1906 the Cadets disagreed with the Labour and peasant deputies (Trudoviki) who wanted the Government to carry out the agrarian reforms immediately.

The Social Democrats sided with the Trudoviki and urged for radical action. The Cadets after some hesitation joined in. 180 Deputies issued the Vyborg Manifesto asking the people not to pay taxes. The Social Democrats conjointly with three organisations of railwaymen, peasants and teachers issued a separate manifesto declaring the Government illegal and called upon the Peasants' Committees to seize lands and the army and navy not to fire on the people. When the Government threatened action, the Cadets retracted their manifesto and the Duma was dissolved. Afterwards the representation of landowners was increased. The new second Duma met on 20th February 1907. It had sixty Social Democrats in it. The Government soon arrested and exiled some of them on the charge of having made propaganda in the army. The Duma again dissolved in June 1907. The same day the law was again changed, the workers, intellectuals and peasants were all disfranchised. It was a complete destruction of even small popular representation. This brought forth the boycott tendency again to the forefront, the initiative being taken by the Teachers' Organisation. Some of the Bolsheviks showed even now signs of favouring boycott. But Lenin unequivocally was against boycott and for participation. This conduct of his has been cited in India several times in order to show that in a great revolutionary fight, even Lenin had compromised and allowed the Party to join the Czarist Duma. From this, it was argued that the compromise in Indian politics need not be condemned because it is a compromise. It must be studied and valued in relation to the concrete objective situation. Exactly for these reasons as given by the critic, Lenin explained his reasons for participation in the Duma in an article headed "Against the Boycott". The situation at the time of the Bulygin Duma in August 1905 was quite different from that in 1907. The boycott of the Bulygin Duma was a complete success and was necessary because at that time the revolutionary wave was rising (something like our boycott of the Assembly in 1920). The old regime was trying to sidetrack the people from the path of direct action and revolution to the zigzag path of the Duma. To have told the people at that time to give up their rising strikes and insurrections for the promises of a constitution was to strengthen Czarism, deprive the people of the lessons of revolutionary activity, the exposure of the real nature

of Czarism. Then even the bourgeoisie was showing opposition. After December, the situation had changed. The insurrection was defeated. The revolution had receded. The Czarist terror had suppressed all organisations, the bourgeoisie had joined hands with Czarism. When revolutionary activity was suppressed, there must be some links for the revolutionary party to keep touch with the people. When the wide popular press was destroyed, the Duma was the best loud-speaker. It had to be used. Participation after the failure of the insurrection was not to be used for purposes of forming alliances with the bourgeois parties, for bourgeois methods of parliamentary wire—pulling, or for smashing autocracy from within. The participation was for unmasking Czarism, for broadcasting the ideology of revolution to the masses. In the third Duma (November 1907 to June 1912) the Social Democrats had fifteen seats and they sat there throughout the period of reaction.

What was the policy followed by the Bolsheviks and other parties with regard to the organisational work, when it became clear that the risings had failed and the revolutionary wave receded? The workers had to bear the brunt of the Czarist attack of repression. The strike movement weakened every year. The percentage of the success for the employers increased year by year, being 29.4 per cent in 1905, 68.8 in 1908 and 80 in 1909. The number of the members of Social Democratic Party fell, the largest number of resignations being from the intellectuals who could not stand the hardships of the period of reaction. Many of them lost themselves in mysticism and God. The literary intellectuals gave prominence to sex problems in literature. The largest number of defections were in the Menshevik sections, who amongst themselves had not evolved ideological solidarity and discipline, and had followed the policy of live and let live. The result was that a section of the Mensheviks called for a policy of "liquidation" of the illegal party. The law was ruthlessly suppressing all organisations which were not monarchist or loyally inclined. The liquidators advocated that illegal secret work was futile. That its gains were not worth the sacrifice. They considered the Duma to be sufficiently democratic to indicate a "change of heart" on the part of Czarism and progress towards the Democratic parliamentarism of the bourgeoisie of Western Europe. They called upon the workers to give up secret

revolutionary organisations and strictly limit themselves to legal unions, welfare clubs etc. Their party in the Duma gave up the demand of expropriation of landlordism in order to please and ally itself with the Cadet bourgeoisie. This move of co-operation with Czarism was so cowardly that some of the Mensheviks revolted against this new legal Marxism and Communism. Plekhanov wrote: "Revolutionary conspiracy is now frequently attacked precisely by those who are unfit for any revolutionary action. They are tired; they want rest, the heavy ceaseless martyrdom of the self-sacrificing rank-and-file workers is beyond their strength, they escape from their circles and try to make themselves and others believe that their fight is no treachery to the cause but merely passing over on to a wider basis".

The Bolsheviks emphasised that Czarism was still the reactionary machine of the feudal aristocracy; that only illegal revolutionary activity could provide the workers with true socialist ideology and it alone could direct the revolutionary labour organisations. The workers must be rallied by this organisation to the three fundamental slogans of 8-hour day, expropriation of the big land-owners and Democratic Republic.

Amongst the Bolsheviks there was a section of "Left Liquidators". They wanted to concentrate solely on illegal work. They upheld the boycott of the Duma. This group was formed by Bogdanov, Lunacharski and Gorky. This tactic was opposed by Lenin who saw that unless the available legal connections were maintained the Party would become a sectarian organisation cut off from the workers. Under Lenin's leadership the Party stuck to the policy of revolutionary work very carefully done through Trade Unions, newspapers etc. and also spread their programme through the Duma.

**52. Stolypin's Agrarian Reforms—revival of trade—strikes begin—parties during reaction—isolation of bourgeois parties—Bolshevik and Menshevik divisions—philosophical struggle—the problems of bourgeois revolution and the peculiarity of the Russian Revolution**

Czarism had not relied merely on violent suppression. It also created a class of supporters for itself. The new policy was worked out by Minister Stolypin who is known for his bloody suppression as also the new agrarian policy. The agrarian policy



was to break up the old Mir or the agrarian communes holding land in common. A law of November 1906 allowed the peasant to claim his share and withdraw from the Mir. This resulted in creating a class of middle peasantry with sufficient land and goods to be called even, "rich" and become a market for capitalist goods and form a village bourgeoisie to support the Czar. Also in the plains cultivation had become difficult for the landowners due to the revolutionary risings. The Government followed the policy of asking the landowners to sell lands directly or through the Agrarian Bank to individual peasants. Thus ten per cent of the land of the great proprietors was sold during four years, of course at high prices. The lands concentrated in the hands of the rich peasants, and the poor peasants became workers in the industries. After the revolution till the war 2½ million peasants thus became industrial workers.

On the "peace" restarted by Black Hundred pogroms and seven thousand death sentences on workers, artisans and peasants, on the market created of the middle peasantry by the Stolypin Reforms and on the cheap labour of the impoverished peasantry pushed into the towns, Czarist reaction triumphed. Industrial production grew and the depression lessened after 1910. It is shown that in the demands for articles required in the countryside there was special rise. The rise in the heavy industries like manufacture of steel and iron was an index of the growth. Metal manufacture rose by 51.3 per cent, pig iron by 65.5 per cent. This industrial boom revived the workers' movement, which began to be seen in the revival of strikes for higher wages. The bourgeoisie in order not to harm its production made a few concessions. But they were meagre and the political demands came forward again. In April 1912 the gold-miners in Lena made economic demands on the company which was a British concern. The mines were situated far away in Siberia. The company was the sole ruler and exploitation was particularly brutal. The company's armed guards attacked the workers and about fifteen hundred strikers were shot dead. One can imagine the brutality of the company against the gold-miners from what we see about their brother exploiters in India in the Oorgaon Gold-Mines in Mysore. The Lena blood-bath called forth protests throughout Russia by strikes and demonstrations. About a million workers had struck, in 1913 1½ millions struck. During first-half of 1914 the figure had risen to 2½ millions.

What was the reaction of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks to this rising wave, and what was the attitude of the workers to these parties? The Menshevik Liquidators wanted to limit the movement to the fight for association, trade unionism and reformism. The Bolsheviks in contrast to this brought forth their programme of the three fundamental aims—8-hour day, expropriation of land owners and a Democratic Republic. The workers to the surprise of the Mensheviks flocked under the lead of the Bolsheviks. It was surprising because during the period of reaction the legal organisations (Trade Unions etc.) of the Mensheviks showed a large and substantial membership while the Bolsheviks were hunted out and looked like a corpse. When the revolutionary tide rose, the Bolsheviks suddenly seemed to have come to life and captured the masses, who refused to continue themselves within the bounds of the advice of "respectable leaders" or radical-looking "Menshevik Communists". T. Dan, the historian and leader of the Menshevik Communists writes: "As a result the liquidators who had up to now been of the opinion that their obvious task in the years of preparation would create a position of advantage for them when the workers' movement revived, noted much to their surprise that their monopolist position was shaken by that illegal Bolshevik Party which they had looked upon as a 'living corpse'."

During the period of reaction another development had taken place. That was the separation of the Bolshevik section of the Social Democratic Party from its Menshevik section. This occurred at the Prague Conference in 1912. As a result the Bolsheviks formed their own Central Committees, their own newspapers, the "Pravda" and "Izvestia". The Labour organisations were also split on the issue of leadership and programme. It may be noted here that the present Communist Party of Russia dates its foundation from 1898, when the Social Democratic Labour Party of Russia was founded. A change in the name of the Party was proposed by Lenin in the Party Conference in May, 1917. But it was not changed as there was no time for discussions. The name Social Democrats now signifies with us the pseudo-Socialists like Kautsky, MacDonald and such others. It is also to

be noted that the programme of the Party was the same since its foundation and was not changed till after the February Revolution of 1917. Both the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks attended the Congresses of the Party, (except when one or the other section could not or did not send their delegates. This happened with the Mensheviks many a time). Many "Unity Conferences" were held between the two sections of the same Party but nothing came out of them. Thus the Bolsheviks had a separate discipline, separate principles and policy though both the sections called themselves Social Democrats. Both preached adherence to Marxism and the necessity of overthrowing Czarism and bringing about a Democratic Republic. In spite of bitter controversies temporary alliances were formed, the most notable being in 1907-09, the alliance between Lenin and Plekhanov, who had become politically a Menshevik, on the question of the philosophical revision of Marxist materialism by prominent Bolsheviks like Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, Gorky, into the channel of subjective idealism, "God-creating" tendencies making way for the priest, the church and ultimately the overthrows of Socialism. In this philosophic controversy a strange combination of the Bolshevik Lenin and the Menshevik Plekhanov was formed against a group which included many Bolsheviks, for example Bogdanov who was still a joint editor with Lenin on the "Proletari". In the present conditions of Party development throughout the world amongst Communists such an anomalous position may not be allowed and the Russian Party developments on these separate incidents may not be taken as precedents because at that time the demarcation of parties and the class-struggle had not become so acute, a world Communist Party had not been born, and the critical epoch of proletarian revolutions though in embryo had not yet set in any active form.

The formation of the Russian Communist Party as separate from Menshevik and other groups, constitutionally sanctioned by the Conference in 1918, was really accomplished in 1912, its elements and adherents were formed during the period of 1905 Revolution, and the reaction and the nucleus of its Leninist leadership laid in the Party disputes of 1906 when a Bolshevik

section was formed by Lenin. On the eve of the world war there was no country where such a strong party development had taken place. The largest party of Europe, the Social Democratic Party of Germany, had a group led by Rosa Luxembourg who was nearest to Lenin, as much uncompromising and theoretically correct in all the major planks of Marxism. This group had not evolved a separate leadership, separate organisation, and separate disillusioned class conscious proletarian following. It had not gone through the splits and cleanings. Liebkuecht, and Luxembourg began that work when the war broke out, when in the fever of patriotism and military dictatorship it had become extremely difficult to plant a revolutionary nucleus amongst the works and prevent them from marching under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. In Russia the Bolsheviks had a ready apparatus to lead the revolution when need arose. The first characterisation that the war is a robber war of imperialists came from the Russian Party, from Lenin.

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Another advantage was that the Russian-proletariat and peasantry had the latest experience of 1905, a rehearsal of the coming revolution. In Western Europe after 1848 and 1871 the imperialist development and colonial loot had prevented such a rehearsal. They had a whole period of 50 years of ascending Capitalism. While in Russia neither the peasantry could be given land at the expense of the landlord nor could the workers' conditions be improved as imperialist-capitalist development had already brought Capitalism to the plane of decline. Thus after 1905 there could not be a long spell of inactivity or materially improved objective conditions for the bribery of the proletariat. And whatever was wanting was completed by the experience of the war.

Another peculiarity of Russia at the beginning of the war was that there the power of the feudal land owning class had not been overthrown and the bourgeoisie had not yet been installed in the control of the State, i.e., the bourgeois revolution had not been carried out. Land-owning Czarism crushed all the classes except that of the feudal landlordism and even bourgeois democratic

freedom was not allowed. Therefore the petty-bourgeois intellectuals were in opposition to Czarism. The problem of the bourgeoisie revolution had been solved in the previous century by the revolutionary bourgeoisie in co-operation with the peasantry, both of whom attacked the feudal power. At that time there was no proletariat strong enough to lead the peasantry or threaten the bourgeoisie in such a manner as to make it counter-revolutionary and give up attacking feudalism. This condition had now been changed. In Russia the proletariat, as soon as it grew to a certain extent, imbibed the lessons of Marxism under the influence of the proletarian movements from the West. The autocracy having prevented even the growth of Trade Unionism helped the growth of revolutionary traditions in the workers from the beginning, which was assisted by the fact that the revolutionary intellectuals finding no outlet in the channel of bourgeoisie democracy devoted their energies to the workers' and peasants' organisations. The bourgeoisie as it developed saw the revolutionary movement of the workers under the influence of Marxism, saw that if it helped the peasantry to the revolutionary overthrow of the land-owning class, the proletariat would follow the same example against itself also. Therefore the bourgeoisie in Russia could not lead the peasantry of Russia against feudalism as it had done in England and France. Naturally the question arose who would carry out the bourgeois revolution, overthrow feudalism and set the productive forces free for capitalist development, which is a higher stage than feudalism? That was the crux of the Party quarrels since 1903 to 1917. The Bolsheviks said that the peasantry was a great revolutionary factor and would fight against landlordism under the leadership of the proletariat and establish a workers' and peasants' Republic as the proletariat alone would give land to the peasantry. The Cadets hoped to solve the problem by reforms through the Duma and giving land to peasants on payment of compensation. The Trotskites considered that a backward country like Russia could not hold out as a workers' and peasants' Republic unless the proletariat of the West accomplished their Socialist revolution. The Mensheviks though in agreement with the Bolshevik programme considered that the Cadets (the Liberal

bourgeoisie, like that formed of our Malaviyas, Patels etc.) would be good ally for the Proletarian parties against Czarism. But the Bolsheviks concentrated their attack on the Cadets more than on any other Party. Why? Because that determined the question under whose leadership the peasantry would march. Without the alliance of the peasantry there could be no revolution. Now the peasantry had illusions that the Cadets would give them land through the Duma. It had to be freed from these illusions, otherwise it would not take to revolutionary attack on feudalism. The Proletariat had to be freed from any alliances with bourgeois parties, since these parties would lead it into illusive compromises. In a revolutionary struggle the compromisers are the greatest danger. Because under the illusion of compromise the revolutionary class postpones or gives up the struggle, the autocracy which is tottering then consolidates itself and massacres revolution. Therefore the Bolsheviks paid more attention to isolating the peasantry and workers from the Cadets and Mensheviks. Hence they were nicknamed "the Cadet eaters". Had they not done so, there would not have remained a single party ready to lead the revolution and to take power from the Provisional Government after March 1917. This is the most significant part of the Bolshevik tactic. The correctness of this tactic is demonstrated by the mess made of the Indian mass movement of emancipation by the Indian "Cadet" Congress. The achievement of the Bolsheviks in the period of 1903 to 1917 was the isolation of the bourgeoisie from the peasantry, the isolation of the Mensheviks from the Proletariat, formation of a well disciplined and tested organisation of revolutionists drawn from the workers, peasants and intellectuals, guided by the theory of Marxism, rescued from the hands of "respectable Marxists" who tried to revise it.

### **53. Russia joins war—the crisis—the February overthrow—Provisional Government and the Soviets—Lenin's return**

It is well-known to the students of history that during the 19th century Russia had acted as a great bogey to Britain

in the East. In the Crimean-War Britain and France had united against Russia but the export of capital from France and England to finance Czarist loans and Russian industry had liquidated the old Russo-British friction and Russia had to join the allies in the war because the Russian bourgeoisie was interlocked with allied capital which was invested in Russian heavy industry.

During the war Czarist militarism was helped by money and munitions from the allies. But a corrupt bureaucracy and a weak bourgeoisie which had not yet advanced to the stage of efficiency of Allied Imperialism was exhausted soon and could not manage the war. The production of munitions began to break down to such an extent that on some fronts the soldiers had not even cartridges for their rifles and were simply killed under fire from German artillery. Discontent grew at the front. Shortage of food led to severe crises in the towns, and shortage of manufactured goods and absence of cultivators on the land led to crises in the countryside. Above all this the peasantry had to maintain parasitic feudalism as before. The first protest came from the Petrograd workers who refused to send delegates to the War Industry Committee, which was an organisation to ensure class peace and bring the workers to co-operate with Czarism to fight the war. The Mensheviks joined the Committee. The Bolsheviks refused. By January 1917 the crisis had become acute and food riots began in Petrograd. These were followed by strike of workers in the factories. The Petrograd garrison was won over by the workers. That settled the fate of Czarism. The soldiers and workers elected their deputies and formed their Soviets. The prison was stormed and political prisoners released. The workers however did not form a revolutionary Government. The Soviet was under the influence of the Mensheviks. In the Duma the Bolshevik deputies had been exiled to Siberia for having opposed the war. The real cadre of Bolshevik leadership was either in prison or exile. Therefore the Duma and the Mensheviks in the Soviet succeeded in introducing compromising hesitation in the Soviet. The Duma formed a Provisional Committee of monarchists and Cadets to

conduct the Government of the Czar, but the Soviet would have no Czar. By a resolution it decided to confiscate the financial resources of the old State, i.e., the State Bank, Currency Printing Press etc. but asked the Duma Finance Commission to carry out the decision. Thus it showed inclination towards the historical step that the Paris Commune had failed to take but left its carrying out in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The President of the State Duma issued an appeal to preserve constitutional and social order and to allow no attacks on life and property. In the meanwhile the Czarist forces tried to restore the old regime. So the workers and soldiers fought on the barricades and streets of Petrograd and Moscow, secured victory and the abdication of the Czar. When the Provisional Government was formed by the Bourgeoisie the Petrograd Soviet discussed the question of participation in the Government. The Mensheviks were for participation. However, the proposal was rejected. But in its policy the Soviet adopted the policy of support to the Government (March 1917). On the same day the Soviet of workers and the Soviet of soldiers amalgamated and issued the famous Army Order No. 1. This order asked the soldiers to elect their own committees and send delegates to the Soviets. The troops were sub-ordinated to the orders of the Soviet and their committees on all political matters. The soldiers were given complete citizen right to participate in politics, were asked to observe military discipline when on duty, but the salute and standing at attention when off duty was abolished. Officers were forbidden to bully or abuse the soldiers. On 16th March the Provisional Government issued its manifesto which granted complete amnesty to political prisoners, liberty of speech, association, press, unions, strikes etc; promised immediate preparation for summoning a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage to determine the constitution and form of State, substitution of a State militia with elected officers in place of the former Police and abolition of the disabilities of the soldiers. This manifesto was endorsed by the Soviets. But in the manifesto the Government avoided the vital question of the termination of war, the confiscation of land, and an unequivocal declaration of Republic. Having left the whole matter to the Constituent



Assembly there was the danger of the Provisional Government sabotaging the revolution, starving Petrograd and its Soviet, continuing the war and ultimately restoring monarchy. The Bolsheviks saw this. But the Soviets at that time flushed with the overthrow of the age-old oppression of Czarism were carried away and supported the bourgeoisie in the Provisional Government. The game of the bourgeoisie was to put the Liberal Democrats, and if necessary even the Menshevik leaders of the Proletariat on the Government seats, then turn to the people and say that the attack of the Germans against Russia with such a 'revolutionary' Government was an attack on the revolution itself; therefore the people must go on with the war. In fact the allied powers had hailed the revolution and acknowledged the new Government and promised it support because the bourgeoisie in power would conduct the war more enthusiastically and efficiently than the decrepit landlordism. The bourgeoisie wanted to hold power on the back of the peasantry and the working-class. It could have done so if it could have solved the land problem. But the land-owning class by its mortgages to the banks, was linked to the bourgeoisie which, if it expropriated the land-owners, would be expropriating itself. Thus when it could not close the war nor give land to the peasantry, it was bound to fall. But this conception about the new Government was not grasped by the Soviets, the Government was not yet discredited before the workers and peasants. Therefore many of the Bolsheviks like Kamenev and Rykov supported the Government. Many believed in the Constituent Assembly, the ideal of the last 20 years, to cure the evils.

This mistake was exposed by Lenin when he returned to Petrograd from exile on April 16. As soon as he landed he chastised the Bolsheviks who had supported the Provisional Government. He at once gave the slogan "No support at all to the Provisional Government", and formulated the famous April Theses which became the basis of the November Revolution.

**54. The first Soviet Congress—Coalition Government—July Demonstration—Kornilov March—Masses turn Left—percentage of the Bolsheviks in the Soviets—Lenin urges Soviets to take power by peaceful revolution—then calls upon Bolsheviks for insurrection—Peasant Congress and compromise with the Left Social Revolutionaries.**

The first All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the real barometer of the opinion of the people, that is the workers and peasants, met in June 1917. This Congress, under the influence of the petty-bourgeois parties, of the Socialist Revolutionaries which had the largest influence amongst the peasantry, and the Mensheviks, who called themselves Communists and had a majority influence in the Town Soviets, supported the imperialist war policy and the Coalition Government of Kerensky. The first Provisional Government when it issued the Note to the Allies stating that they would continue the war to the end had called forth a protest from the soldiers which led to a crisis in the Government. The Foreign Minister Miliukov was made to resign under pressure from the Soviets, and the First Government dissolved. The masses had to be deceived by a better method. So a Coalition Government was formed with the support of the Soviet of Petrograd (May 1917). In the Government the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks had responsible ministries, thus giving the appearance to the Government of being formed of the real representatives of the masses. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture was given to V. Cheronov, the most influential man amongst the peasants. (It was like giving Pandit Jawahar Lal the portfolio of agriculture in U.P., while retaining the imperialist army, the peasant debts and all capitalist relations intact and yet calling it a Government of the masses.) Naturally the Congress of the Soviets supported the Government and its policy. The Bolsheviks who differed were hooted. Lenin considered the support of the Soviets so important that he attended the Congress as a rank and file delegate and addressed the Congress on the Bolshevik programme. With the support of the Soviet Congress Kerensky planned a big offensive on the front. But the soldiers were exhausted, technique had broken down and the Russian

army was massacred. When the news of the tragedy reached Petrograd, the workers and soldiers came out on the streets. They took the slogan "Down with the Government, all power to the Soviet". The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party was asked to direct the operations and seize power. The Central Committee flatly refused. The masses were veering to the Left but had not done so completely. The Government of the popular parties of Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks was not yet discredited completely in the eyes of the majority of the people. Hence the Central Committee refused. The July Demonstration was turned into a peaceful demonstration and a premature rising was prevented, with the result that Kereňsky arrested some of the leading Bolsheviks and suppressed their papers.

The petty-bourgeois Government, incapable of carrying out the proletarian programme or even the bourgeois programme could not satisfy either a revolution or a counter-revolution. The situation of 1848 was brought back. Therefore the bourgeoisie, the land-owners and the allied imperialists planned a military coup to overthrow both the Soviets and the Government. General Kornilov marched on Petrograd with some monarchist troops. The Soviets came out to a man to give battle to the monarchist coup and Kornilov was beaten. This roused the workers and peasants to the danger of the counter-revolution. The capitalists began to corner food-stuffs and goods and planned a famine in the cities which were the strongholds of the revolution. The failure to introduce 8 hours day and workers' control even six months after the revolution, increased the Bolshevik adherents in the ranks of the workers. The petty-bourgeois parties held a Democratic Conference, promised speedy summoning of the Constituent Assembly, but by September end the masses were completely disillusioned and were ready for seizure of power by the Soviets. The growth of Bolshevik majority was felt in the numerous non-party conferences of the workers and peasants, in the Democratic conference, and in the Trade Unions and the Soviets. The growth of Bolshèvik majority in the Soviets can be seen from their percentage of delegates to the Congress. The implicit

support was of course much more than is illustrated in the figures:

All-Russian Congress of Soviets	No. of Delegates	No. of Bolsheviks	% of Bolsheviks
1st 16 June 1917	790	103	13
2nd 10 November 1917	675	343	51
3rd 23 January 1918	710	434	61
4th 20 March 1918	1232	795	64
5th 7 July 1918	1164	773	66

These figures ought to shatter the statements of the bourgeois intellectuals and the "purely democratic" gentlemen Socialists of the Second International that the Bolsheviks seized power as a minority clique of a few—only it was a determined and efficient minority (Reference Public Prosecutors' Address to the Court).

Though the Bolsheviks were in majority and had the backing of the working-class and peasantry it did not mean that power was surrendered by the bourgeoisie of its own accord or in recognition of "the right of majority to rule the country". Neither did the Bolsheviks beseech Kerensky on "bended knees" to give power in the hands of the Soviets because the people were behind them. When the crisis intensified in September, the peasants began to confiscate the big estates on their own initiative and formed local Soviets to supervise distribution and control. The so-called Revolutionary Government sent troops to protect the landowners, but the troops in some cases soon fraternised with the peasantry and in others were driven by it. In September the Railway workers struck for higher wages, the landowners asked the Government to double the price of corn bought by the Government from them which was agreed to by Kerensky who would not, however, increase the wages of Railwaymen. Relying on these symptoms Lenin urged the preparation for insurrection and a forcible overthrow of the Government. Before he urged this measure, it is worthy to note that he tried much to form a Coalition Government with Left Socialist elements and even the Mensheviks in the Soviets, urging them to supersede the Provincial Government and

take power in their hands. From his retreat, on September 26-27, Lenin wrote: "The Russian Democracy, the Soviets, the Socialist Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties have before them now an opportunity which is rare in the history of revolution. They can assure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly on the date fixed without adjournment, they can preserve the country from military and economic disaster, they can safeguard the peaceful development of events . . . there could be no longer any question of resistance to the Soviets but their hesitations. No class will dare to provoke insurrection against them, and enlightened by the Kornilov experience the big proprietors will peacefully surrender power before the Soviets' ultimatum. In order to overcome the capitalists' resistance to the Soviet programme it will suffice to institute a vigilant supervision by the peasants and workers over the exploiters and a short time imprisonment upon the recalcitrants. If the Soviets seized power they could still—and it is probably the last chance—assure the peaceful development of the revolution, the peaceful election by the people of their representatives, the peaceful competition of parties within the bosom of the Soviets, the experiments of different party programmes and the peaceful transference of power from one party to another". This peaceful development of the revolution, however, cannot be confounded with the non-violent revolution of the Indian bourgeoisie. The political and economic content of the former was quite different from that of the latter. The transference of power from the bourgeoisie to the Soviets involved a complete destruction of feudal economy depriving the bourgeoisie of political power, and if necessary the nationalisation of key industries accompanied by workers' control, in those that were not nationalised. It was a transference of economic and political power from one class to another. Lenin contemplated the possibility at that particular moment of a "peaceful development", because, as he clearly states, "the whole mass of the working - class and peasantry and the military forces were behind the Soviets and ready to support the seizure of power; since they had lost faith in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties of which the Provincial Government was formed by reason of the Kornilov

*rising and the economic sabotage of the bourgeoisie. (On August 1, 1917, before the Bolshevik Revolution, 568 concerns had been closed down by the owners on various pretexts.) The Indian petty-bourgeois parties when they talk of their peaceful revolution, have none of these class forces in their minds or objectively before them either in their economic or political content.*

But the conditions favourable for the proposal had vanished within four days by the rapid march of events. So by the beginning of October Lenin was urging the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks to seize power immediately either in Moscow or in Petrograd. There were a few members in the Central Committee who considered the movement still premature. But Lenin's viewpoint secured a majority. Complete preparations were made keeping in mind the profound instructions of Marx "insurrection is an art; defensive is the death of insurrection". Reliable battalions were converged on strategical point; the battleship Aurora, whose sailors were the staunchest Bolsheviks, was brought to play its guns and exactly seven hours before this time today, the 7th of November, fourteen years ago, Krylenko staggering with fatigue climbed to the tribune of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets with a telegram in his hand, just as today we climbed into the dock with a telegram but differently worded—to the Soviet. "Comrades, from the northern front the army sends greetings to the Soviets announcing the formation of a Military Revolutionary Committee which has taken over the command of the northern front". It is a sorry spectacle, yet full of revolutionary hopes that we on the Indian front cannot send a like telegram to the First Workers' Republic announcing them the victory of the Indian revolution. We could simply express the revolutionary greetings, which we have done today, congratulating them on their victory which also is partially a victory for the Indian working-class and peasantry.

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The seizure of power by the Bolsheviks means the seizure by the workers and peasants. But the Bolshevik Party had its strongest organisations in the workers of the towns. In the vast

peasant land of Russia, a purely workers' organisation could not be expected to run the Government without the support of the peasantry. The Bolsheviks had not a vast network of their leadership in the peasantry, which though quite sympathetic to the Bolsheviks was organisationally bound in the organisation of the Socialist Revolutionaries. The All-Russian Congress of peasants assembled in Petrograd, refused to recognise the Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee and the Government formed by it. But the great peasant party of the S.Rs. was itself split in a Right and Left section, the Left being in the majority and sympathetic to the Bolsheviks. Lenin proposed a compromise to them, included three representatives of theirs in the Council of Peoples Commissars on certain ministerial posts and won over the support of the leading influences in the villages and small towns. But it must be noted that the compromise did not surrender the hegemony of the Bolshevik Party, i.e., of the factory workers.

#### **55. Land Decree—Brest Peace—Sabotage of the petty-bourgeoisie—Dispersal of the Constituent Assembly**

The Government of the bourgeoisie and land-owners was overthrown and that of the workers and peasants enthroned. What were the consequences of this revolutionary change? The new Government was not like that of the Labour Party, administering the affairs of the bourgeoisie. It was to be the smashing of the feudal bourgeois State and its replacement by the worker's State. But this worker's State was not immediately carrying out a Socialist revolution, i.e., overthrow of the bourgeoisie in social economy altogether. The first act in the economic transformation was the Land Decree by which the feudal ownership of land was abolished. Henceforth land ownership was vested in the State. Land ownership is nominally vested in the State in British India also. In Britain and France, feudal land ownership was destroyed a century earlier; so in this respect the Soviet Land Decree was merely carrying out the bourgeois revolution. But there was a complementary part to the decree, to this bourgeois revolution which was absent in the former revolutions. The political power in the present case was held by the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet led

by the Communist Party. What difference did this make? In the former case, the land got into the hands of the rich peasants and ultimately into the hands of banks and agricultural financiers. The land workers and poor peasants were expropriated. In the Soviet State this was prevented. The seizure was now an *organised seizure*—i.e., the local peasant committees and Soviets seized the land, and expelled the feudal landlords. Then the disposal of the land was made according to the needs and capacity. There was another danger lurking in this. The landless worker or poor peasant having no cattle and capital was bound to be exploited by the richer peasant who possessed cattle and capital. Thus gradually the land of the poor peasant was bound to be concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie and become the basis for the reintroduction of the bourgeoisie into political power, acting from the base of the villages and therefore more powerful and dangerous. The insurance against this was the formation of separate committees of the poor peasants and land workers, holding the livestock and farm tools of the big estates by the village Soviets and lending them to the poor peasants for use. This weightage, political and economic, is completely absent under the bourgeois State, though the land may be nominally nationalised and owned by the State.

Next to the land question came the question of peace. The Soviet Government at once asked all the belligerent powers to convene a delegate conference for cessation of war and making "a peace without annexation and indemnities." The Allies refused. German Imperialism hoped to defeat the disorganised Russian armies thoroughly, seize the grain and coal areas in South Russia and thus with renewed strength attack the Allies. The Bolsheviks refused the peace terms leaving to the Germans the conquered territories. During the negotiations Trotsky utilised the conference to broadcast his appeals to the workers of the belligerent countries to revolt and stop the war. He appealed to the German proletariat to rise and stop the German attack on workers' Russia. The German workers responded. There were strikes in Berlin and in the Navy. But there was not as yet a desire for general revolutionary upheaval. German Imperialism



succeeded in crushing the workers at home. In Ukraine they exploited the bourgeois nationalists, set up a Rada which refused to join hands with the Soviet negotiations for peace and concluded a separate peace with Germany in such a manner that Ukraine became a base of German Imperialism. There was a great crisis in Russia over the German peace terms. The Communists refused to yield an inch of ground. Would it not be betrayal of their declarations for peace without annexations? How could they surrender the border line workers and peasants to German rule? The Russian Party was rent with controversies. The Leninists wanted even to go to Siberia, if the Germans conquered Petrograd and Moscow, and conduct the Soviet Government there. Lenin at this stage intervened and was the sole person responsible for defeating this Leftist heroism. The Proletarian Revolution rested on the workers and peasants of European Russia. A transfer of the peoples Commissariats with the whole band of the excellent brains of the revolution to the Siberian forests would not mean a transfer of the real basis of the revolution. It would be merely a romanticism of the Robinhood type and not a Proletarian State. The conquest of the revolution required "a breathing space" which must be bought if necessary at the expense of a peace dictated by a robber Imperialism, "with its knee on the chest" of the revolution. The peace terms would leave the Proletarian basis of power in all branches untouched, and even the few territories now lost would be restored soon, if the German workers made a revolution in their country, signs of which had already become visible. After a tremendous intra-party struggle the Brest-Litovsk peace was signed on 18th March, 1918, after the Allies had refused help against Germany.

More serious to combat was the internal danger of sabotage by the petty-bourgeoisie. The petty-bourgeois middle-class employees of the railways organised in the Vikzel, refused to transport the troops of the Soviet Government against the counter-revolutionary Kerensky, under the plea that it took no sides until the Constituent Assembly decided the question of power. Here again the class-consciousness of workers came to the rescue.

Though the middle-class staff was not richly paid by the bourgeoisie and was as much exploited as the lower grade manual workers, like the signallers, pointsmen, coalers, enginemen etc. yet the petty-bourgeoisie of the Station-masters and such others were ideologically and culturally allied with the bourgeoisie, while the other sections were not. The Proletarian rank and file, as against the Trade Union petty-bourgeois bureaucracy, ran the trains, helped the Soviet, and the Vikzel's sabotage was broken. Then there was the sabotage of the State Bank clerks and salaried officers, and of the telephone bourgeois girls. Here too the Soviet appointed its own officers, who went to the Bank and learnt from the peons the allocation of duties. At the prospect of such a powerful sabotage many a Bolshevik weakened, but Lenin stood firm and asked the Party to learn from the peons and the lowest grade employees the work of the State. A lot of venomous propaganda is carried on against the Soviet that it wanted to destroy the intellectuals, the middle-class, petty-bourgeoisie, "the salaried proletariat", who under the Bolshevik terror were compelled to flee the country. The British imperialist propaganda agents in India frighten the petty-bourgeoisie by their imaginary fate under a proletarian rule. But all this is mere misrepresentation. There is no doubt that the higher civilian bureaucracy whether Indian or British will be removed from its posts altogether. It cannot be retained even on the low salaries proposed in the Commune State (even on the Rs. 500/- as found in the Mahatma's proposal) because that bureaucracy is in most cases directly related in blood and money to the landowners and the bourgeoisie. The heads and most important sub-heads of the bureaucratic machine have to be removed altogether, otherwise the continuity of the previous bureaucratism cannot be broken. But such need not be the case with the lower subordinates and the staff. Lenin wrote: "Besides the preponderatingly 'repressive part' of the apparatus, the standing army, police, officialdom, there is in the contemporary State machine another part, closely interconnected with banks and syndicates fulfilling a great mass

of work of account keeping and registration, if one may so express it. This part of the apparatus cannot and must not be broken up. It must only be torn from subjection to capitalists with their wire-pulling influence. It must be subjected to the Proletarian Soviets. Thus when the State Bank was seized, only the former Governor was removed and replaced by the Bolshevik Finance expert, Piatakov. But wherever such steps were taken the petty-bourgeoisie, incited by the former masters, sabotaged or struck work. When their resistance was met with firmness and the Soviet State could not be overthrown by them, the sabotage collapsed within four months. Only the higher bureaucracy migrated out of Russia, along with the landowners and capitalists; (and one of them has found his way into India to become the most imaginative Prosecution witness, Inspector Derojinsky, P.W. No. 182).

All the counter-revolutionary groups, the non-Bolshevik Parties and even honest petty-bourgeois elements, who did not believe in the efficacy of the Soviet system, concentrated their energies on the Constituent Assembly. The slogan of the Constituent Assembly had been adopted and made popular by all the revolutionary parties, including the Bolsheviks, for the last 20 years. Every strike, every demonstration asked for a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage to determine the constitution of Russia. Land to the peasants, ordinary rights of citizens in a bourgeois democracy such as were found in the West were to come to the people only through the Constituent Assembly. Now when the Soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies were the political power what was to be done with the Constituent Assembly which the Provisional Government had failed to call, and which failure was one of the reasons of popular opinion veering towards the Bolsheviks who asked for the immediate convening of the Assembly? Here was a problem of first-rate importance before the Communist Party. Was the Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage to be allowed to determine the constitution of the new State and act as the sanction for the new State, or was the Soviet Congress to

predominate. A large number of Bolsheviks were under the infatuation of the last 20 years' propaganda. They thought that if the Constituent Assembly supported them and the Government then alone would they enjoy the support of all the people, i.e. all the workers and peasants.

But Lenin struck quite a different note. The Soviet form of democracy was a higher form than parliamentary democracy as represented by the Constituent Assembly. To allow the C.A. to act as a sanction for the Soviet State was to go back a stage. The C.A. was now the rallying centre of the bourgeoisie and the counter-revolution, while the workers and peasants solidly stood behind the Soviets as is shown in the table quoted in para 54. The C.A. therefore should be allowed to meet but it must be dispersed after it had shown its bankruptcy in meeting the demands of the workers and peasants. Lenin arrived at this formulation and was confident that the C.A. would not meet the demands of the masses because out of the 36 million votes that were polled the S. Rs. had polled 20 million, the Bolsheviks 9 million and other parties 6 million, which presented quite a different contrast to the percentage of seats held by the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Congress. Of the elected members again 535 were anti-Bolsheviks and 168 Bolsheviks. When the date of the Convocation came near, the S. Rs. tried to mobilise battalions to protect the C.A. from dispersing. When the preliminary conferences of the delegates took place, the Bolshevik group proposed to them that they ratify the land decree of the Soviet. The conferences with a majority of petty-bourgeois elements under the leadership of the bourgeois groups refused. That much was sufficient to expose the "bourgeois parliament" in the eyes of the masses. The Bolsheviks, when the C.A. met, sent an order for the deputies to disperse. Thus the long dreamt of bourgeois parliament that was to give democratic freedom was superseded by the Soviets and the leadership of the C.P. The "constitutional screen" of the landowners and the bourgeoisie to hide their class dictatorship and delude the workers and peasants was torn away.

56. **What is International in the Russian Revolution—tendency to partial acceptance of Leninism—Lenin shows four specific conditions of the Russian Revolution—Leninism is not mere application of Marxism—the eleven points that enriched Marxism—Indian tendency to reject certain points—accept whole or reject whole—no non-party attitude**

The facts and significance of the Russian Revolution were at first perverted by the intellectual agents of the world bourgeoisie. But when the Soviet grew stronger and withstood all attacks, there was a rush of visitors and delegations to study the new phenomenon of the working-class building up Socialist Society. (For example delegations from the Labour Party.) When the workers of the world, under the leadership of the Communist Parties, began to hold the ideal of the Soviet before themselves the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia and the labour aristocracy acting as the agents of Capitalism within the Labour Movement adopted a new tactic. In the European countries, they had adulterated Marxism, tried to "revise" and "correct" it, on the ground that after the experiences of the new stage of Capitalism-Imperialism which was not prevalent when Marx formulated his doctrines, Marxism requires "correction" or "revision". They have produced a breed which says "we are Marxists—but not Leninists. We are Communists but not of the Third International type." (As is hinted in the cross examination of Mr. Brailsford.) Some have gone further and say, "we are Leninists, but not according as the Comintern understands it today." Now what is the result of such an attitudes? We are familiar with this sort of political acrobatics even in the camp of the Indian national bourgeoisie. When a certain slogan or political principle becomes popular with the masses, the politically worn out reactionary groups change their outer skin in order to ingratiate themselves with the new trend of mass psychology. If the masses accept them they become the settled centres of reaction within the growing movement and betray at the time of crisis. For example, the big Indian bourgeoisie with its land-owning affiliations, refused to accept the word "Swaraj" at the 1906 Congress and broke the Session.

Next they fought the introduction of the Home Rule ideal of the radical petty-bourgeoisie in 1917. When Home Rule became popular and the masses began to march under its flag, they adopted the Home Rule ideal. When the petty-bourgeois Congress chucked out the word Dominion Status from its constitution in 1920 they held away for a time but reentered it and from within sidetracked the mass forces on to the line of reaction. Today even the most counter-revolutionary bourgeois talks of complete Independence, but "honestly" differs on the nature of that Independence as conceived by the revolutionary parties. Similarly when Marxism became the accepted creed of the working-class, the petty-bourgeoisie accepted it but wanted to revise it. The attempts at revision were strongly fought by the Bolsheviks. The erstwhile Marxists like Plekhanov and Kautsky denounced the Russian Revolution and its methods lest the working-class of every country be enamoured into following them. But when the workers of the industrial countries and the oppressed toilers of the subject countries gravitated towards the Soviet idea, the opportunists in the revolutionary proletarian movement adopted a new tactic. They said that the Soviet is really the workers' State. Lenin was really the greatest leader of the proletariat. But then you cannot accept his principles and methods in other countries. Russia had her own "peculiarities." We cannot learn lessons of the Russian Revolution, because our country's development is "peculiar" (as Jawahar Lal and Subash Bose would like to put it). We admire Leninism but only when it is restricted to Russia. Moreover even if Leninism is to be applied to the conditions in our country the application as suggested by the Comintern is wrong. Thus argues a certain section of the radical intellectuals in India, who finding that the Labour Parties of Europe and even the Liberal and Labour imperialists have succeeded in their career-making before the workers on the slogan of Socialism and Marxism (adulterated, perverted and revised) writ large on their flag to deceive the working-class, and are giving up their wholesale opposition to Marxism and Socialism. Socialism and Marxism are becoming a fashion with some of the Indian warlords and even a man like Sir Fazle

Hussain confessed with great pride before the Session of the Federation of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in 1930 that he too was "something of a Socialist." A man like Subash Bose when faced with the strength and solidarity of the workers' demonstration at the Calcutta Congress in 1928 was hesitating whether to choose between the workers or his petty-bourgeois volunteers. But when he became conscious of the new forces he began to wear the borrowed Trade Union and Socialist feathers, to strut as a genuine eagle among the revolutionary working-class, but at the same time would like to keep some mental reservations on the question of what attitude the working-class should adopt towards the problem of Geneva. We meet with the spectacle of a Congress President declaring his "Socialist" solidarity with the working-class and peasantry and in his actual politics paying homage to the "discipline" imposed by a counter-revolutionary compromise or a Pact. All of them praise Marx and Lenin, because the revolutionary working-class in India is by the instinct of an oppressed class moving towards the Soviet idea, towards Leninism, though even advanced members of that class may not be able to express it scientifically in so many words. Lenin himself had anticipated these trickeries and when he was alive he pointed out that the Russian Revolution has its own peculiarities no doubt, but there are "some fundamental features of our revolution to be of such international significance . . . The advanced workers in every land have long understood—although in many cases they did not so much understand it as feel it through the instinct of their revolutionary class." (Reference Ext. P. 975.) But neither Lenin nor the Comintern insist that every feature of the Russian Revolution or the Russian Party will be copied in other countries, including the bald head of Lenin or the beard of Marx. Such slavish unscientific imitations are left to the degenerate petty-bourgeoisie or the religious fanatics who would follow their prophets to the length of wearing a *langoti* or having their heads shaved in three places. Lenin said "Of course it would be the greatest mistake to exaggerate this truth (of international application of the Russian experience) and apply more than the fundamental features of our revolution. It would be likewise

erroneous not to keep in mind that after the Proletarian Revolution in one of the advanced countries, things will in all probability take a sharp turn; Russia will cease to be the model and will become again the backward (in Soviet or Socialist sense) country." Because a highly industrialised country like England, Germany or U.S.A. can build Socialism faster and more easily than an agrarian country like Russia. What were the peculiar conditions according to Lenin helping the Russian Revolution whose repetition in another country is not very probable? These specific conditions were (1) The possibility of connecting the Soviet Revolution with the conclusion, thanks to it, of the imperialist war which had exhausted the workers and peasants to an incredible extent. (2) The possibility of making use for a certain time of the deadly struggle of two world powerful groups of imperialist plunderers, who were unable to unite against their Soviet enemy. (3) The possibility of withstanding a comparatively lengthy civil war partly because of the gigantic dimensions of the country and the bad means of communication. (4) The existence of such a profound bourgeois revolutionary movement amongst the peasantry that the Proletarian Party included in its programme the revolutionary demands of the Peasant Party (the S. Rs, a Party which was sharply hostile to Bolshevism) and at once realised these demands through the proletarian conquest of power.

But Leninism is not merely the application of Marxism to these specific conditions of the Russian struggle. Leninism is a further development of Marxism in the epoch of Imperialism and proletarian revolutions. You cannot be a Marxist without being a Leninist, nor can you be a Leninist without learning the lessons of the Russian Revolution, because Leninism developed in relation to certain class forces and their conflict, in relation to a bourgeois revolution as well as a proletarian revolution, the general features of which apart from its Russian peculiarities are bound to be reproduced in every country, in so far as the general features of feudalism or Capitalism are reproduced in the same way in every country. We have seen the general deductions of Marxism from the class-struggle of Marx's time. Leninism enriched that



experience by the solution of the following questions: (1) The theory of Imperialism and of the Proletarian Revolution. (2) The conditions and the forms of realising the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. (3) The mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry. (4) The significance of the national question generally. (5) Particularly the significance for the World Proletarian Revolution of national movements in colonial and semi-colonial countries. (6) The role of the Party. (7) The tactics of the Proletariat in the epoch of imperialist wars. (8) The role of the Proletarian State in the transition period. (9) The Soviet State as a concrete type of the Proletarian State in that period. (10) The problem of social sub-divisions in the Proletariat itself as a source of the division of the Labour Movement into an opportunist and revolutionary tendency. (11) Overcoming both the Right Social Democratic tendencies and Left deviations in the Communist Movement.

D/- 13.11.31

Those who accept "Marxism", (as they would call it) but say that they are not Leninists or Communists, accept mostly the Marxian critique of Capitalism but reject its revolutionary part, especially on the question of the overthrow of the capitalist political power, with its corrupt bourgeois Parliamentarism, and its replacement by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The opportunist Socialists of the imperialist countries reject Leninism because they do not want to strive for the separation and independence of those countries that are subject to their Imperialisms. The "Marxists" of the Second International in England, France, U.S.A. would desire the independence of India, China etc. but would not aid the revolutionary movements of those countries for independence. They would rather persuade the subject countries not to press for independence though they would recognise the abstract right to independence of these countries (e.g. Mr. Brailsford's view, as is seen in his evidence before this Court). In India also we find the petty-bourgeois

Socialist parties of the Punjab, and C.P., adopting the fashion of Socialism but preaching against Leninism and the Comintern. We find the President of the Trade Union Congress—Ruikar—asking for immediate establishment of Socialism and in the same breath urging for more representation at the Round Table Conference which is the summum bonum of class-collaboration on the part of petty-bourgeois nationalists, Labour imperialists, feudal land-owners, princes and the industrial bourgeois all trying to reconcile their irreconcilable contradictions.

We have to reject all such deviations. We stand for complete application of Leninism to the Indian conditions, unequivocal adherence to Marxism-Leninism by every one who is a Communist, and further complete adherence to the Comintern. There are some who would like to accept Leninism but would hesitate to adhere to the C.I. Such an attitude is a contradiction because it rejects the Leninist line on point number 6 in the eleven points noted above. If you accept Marxism thoroughly, you have to logically accept Leninism, the Party and the Comintern. If you deny the Comintern you then naturally deny the Party, and "only that much part of Leninism and Marxism" as some people express it. Then you create a dual Party or no Party. In the former case, if a more or less good party exists already, it is bound to lead to a conflict and sabotage of the Proletarian struggle which then becomes divided under dual leadership. In the latter case no party means no correct leadership which leads to aimless piecemeal disorderly struggle. Thus in both cases you arrive ultimately at the negation of Leninism and the Proletarian revolution. The whole chain is quite indivisible. I will deal with the Indian aspect of this question as found in the exhibits a little latter on. Suffice it to say that the attempt of the Prosecution and some pseudo-Socialists to separate Marxism from Leninism and contrapose them is an attempt to introduce opportunism in the Indian Communist Movement. For us there can be no such thing as an "independent attitude" of taking "the good points" of both Moscow and Geneva and rejecting the bad. For us Moscow is all truth and Geneva all lie.

**57. Bolsheviks and Red Terror—how it arose—causes of allied hatred of the November Revolution—the wild stories against the Soviets—Anarchism of the Bakuninist Anarchists—casualties in Petrograd fighting—no restrictions on political parties except the bourgeois—intervention in Civil War—the S.R. rising and attempt on Lenin's life—Red Terror instituted—Kautsky's books and Lenin's answer to him—formal democracy and dictatorship**

Did the Bolsheviks on their installation in power start a reign of terror? (The late Mr. Langford James in his address to the Court drew a very vivid picture of this supposed Red Terror.) Capitalist propaganda between February and November 1917 was overflowing with the praise of the bloodless Russian Revolution, because that revolution had put into power the bourgeoisie, which was pledged to war. After November the intense venom of the bourgeois press was released against the Bolsheviks, because in the first place they repudiated imperialist war and signed peace with Germany. But this they did after calling upon all the allies to stop the war and join a peace conference which they refused. There were 18 such attempts and appeals from the Soviet between November 1917 and December 1919. The second reason was that the Soviet repudiated the Czarist debts, on the strength of which the Czar had maintained his autocracy. The third was that the new State was not a bourgeois Parliamentary State but a proletarian class State. If it were allowed to exist it would be an inspiration to the world proletariat and peasantry. The world propaganda against the Soviet was thus the concentrated hatred of the world bourgeoisie against the world proletariat and peasantry. The innumerable lies that were spread about the Bolsheviks have now died down, exposed and smashed by the most progressive and healthy development of Soviet Russia and the necessity forced upon decaying Imperialism to come to terms with her. The hideous form of the propaganda of early days has now been replaced by a subtle method which trade in India on the ignorance of the people helped by the rigorous censorship maintained by the Government. Mr. Langford James in his address to the Court repeated almost all the old stories about Soviet Russia, and the attempt was so disgusting that even the "Daily Herald" of London

which has no love for the Soviet was ashamed of it and denounced it. It is not necessary here to recount all those lies. You can find them systematically put down and exposed by an American author, E. A. Ross, who has gone into the question in his book "The Russian Soviet Republic." Immediately after the November Revolution there was no Red Terror. Neither was there a general confiscation of the belongings of the bourgeoisie. The Soviet had not even declared the factories nationalised. The seizure of power in Petrograd resulted only in 1408 casualties and the so-called bombardment had not gone beyond the smashing of window panes of the Palace. Immediately after the conquest the Anarchists had issued an appeal according to their principles of abolishing the State immediately (of whatever class) urging upon the people to seize everything they liked, and calling upon every section of them, including thieves and robbers to abolish society. In order to abolish the State they encouraged the weakening of centralisation of power. They said: "Village, ignore the orders of the city, disobey the centre. Organise the Commune. Ye Gulls of Religion, destroy the churches. Blow up the universities." (Full text of this interesting Manifesto can be found in Ross' book.) Such attempts of the Bakuninist Anarchists were bound to result in a certain disorder and they were attributed to the Bolsheviks who in the first days allowed full freedom to all the revolutionary political parties and did not take any steps against the propaganda of the parties like those of the S.Rs. and Anarchists. There was no terror either against the bourgeoisie or the petty-bourgeoisie. But the overthrown bourgeoisie fights for its counter-revolution with tenfold vigour. Even before November Petrograd and the big cities were threatened with famine, the Bolsheviks began to take energetic steps against this. The bourgeoisie supported the Czarist Generals in their revolt. The French, British, American and all the other bourgeois powers united to smash the Soviet and aided the Czarist Generals in starting the Civil War. In March 1918 when the Germans were silenced by the Brest Treaty, the British landed marines on the Murmansk Coast on the plea that they wanted only to protect their base in the Baltic against the Germans and would vacate it very soon. But after landing they massacred the whole of the Kem Soviet in July 1918. The Czecho-Slovaks who were on

Russian soil and wanted to go back to fight on the side of France were allowed to proceed to Vladivostok to board their ships. On the way, at the instigation of France, which paid them 11 million roubles and England which paid 3½ millions, they seized the Siberian Railway and fought the Soviets in May 1918. The Japanese, the British and the Americans landed troops in Siberia on 6th April and July 17th, 1918. The Czech treachery starved Moscow as they held up the food transport in Samara and Simbrisk. From the North the British advanced from Archangel. The plan was to join hands with the Czechs and Kolchak who was advancing from the Urals. From the South the Cossacks helped by the British and French guns advanced towards North. Thus when the foreign imperialist powers were out to overthrow the Soviet by armed intervention, in Moscow and Petrograd they carried on conspiracies with the S.Rs. and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The head of this was Lockhart of the British Mission. The conspiracy was hatched in the extra-territorial grounds of the Consulate. The British Lieutenant Riley got into touch with the Commander of the Lettish Guard of the Smolny, by name Berzin, and promised him several hundred thousand roubles. Forged documents purporting to be secret Russo-German treaties were to be planter<sup>d</sup> in the peoples' commissariats. The question was seriously debated whether Lenin or Trotsky should be merely kidnapped or should be killed on the spot. Some one pointed out that these two had such uncanny powers that if kidnapped they would win over their kidnappers on the way by propaganda and get free. So they must be killed. But Berzin was a Bolshevik Commander. He joined the conspiracy but took instructions from the Bolshevik Cheka. When everything was ready the Mission was raided and the whole conspiracy exposed in August 1918. Just then the Socialist revolutionaries, becoming reactionary, arose in revolt. They murdered the German ambassador, Count Mirbach, to show that they did not like the Brest peace with Germany. It was an attempt to involve Soviet Russia in war with Germany, a suicidal policy at the moment. The S.Rs. were suppressed and expelled from the Government. The coalition of 18th November, 1917 was ended and henceforth the peoples' Commissariat was wholly a Proletarian Government under the

guidance of the Communists. The S.Rs. however did not stay their hands. Their Party headquarters had now become the rendezvous for bourgeois conspirators. On 5th September an attempt was made on Lenin's life in Moscow. Uritsky of the Cheka was killed in Petrograd and Volodarsky in Moscow. This was the last blow to the freedom of the political parties and the more or less absence of any rigorous restrictions on the bourgeoisie. The working-class of Russia was profoundly moved by this attack on their greatest leader. The effect was exactly contrary to the expectations of the bourgeoisie. The workers and peasants gathered round the banner of Bolshevism more solidly than before. A complete extermination of the counter-revolutionaries was demanded and hence the Red Terror came into existence. The difference between the Red Terror and White Terror is that the former is exercised by the overwhelming majority of the people through their State power, which is frankly a class State, against the minority—the exploiters. The White Terror is exercised by a minority against the whole people to protect its parasitic and decaying existence against social progress. Every new revolutionary class, when it rises to power, has to exercise its revolutionary terror against the class which is overthrown. Every new class power is threatened by armed intervention and the violation of its integrity by the surrounding exploiters. The bourgeois French Revolution of 1793, whose principles are now taught even in school text-books of the bourgeoisie, had to institute its terror against feudalism and its allies. The French bourgeoisie was attacked by the British bourgeoisie allied with the European feudal States, consistently for 22 years (1793-1815). To combat the attack, the hives of the enemy inside the bosom of the revolution had to be cleaned out. The Bolshevik terror was nothing compared to the French terror. The Red Terror did not use its proletarian revolutionary arm against more than 10,000 counter-revolutionaries. The French, the British and other bourgeois States, that had risen to power by exterminating feudalism on the shoulders of the peasantry, were now sending their armed forces to kill the revolution of the workers and peasants of Russia, because it had dared to rise to power against the bourgeoisie.

We hear a lot about the Communist International "interfering in the internal affairs" of the British Empire, trying to overthrow the Empire and fomenting revolution. But Mr. Churchill and the renegades of the Labour Party try to hide from the workers that they spent millions of pounds in supplying arms and officers to the counter-revolutionary Denikins, Kolchaks and Wrangels in Russia, that they interfered most violently in the internal affairs of Russia. Mr. Churchill, fearing that the British soldiers might refuse to fight against Russia, cheated them into landing at Archangel on the pretence that British missions and troops had been stranded and required a rescue. For two years the bourgeois bandits of England, France, U.S.A. and Japan killed thousands of peasants and workers of Russia until the Red Army drove them out.

And now they complain of the Comintern sending into their countries not armed battalions but revolutionary leaflets. Can these assassins of Lenin and thousands of Soviet workers show a single instance of the Comintern or its members having ever attempted to kill any one of these imperialist bandits? The Social Democratic and petty-bourgeois lackeys of Imperialism forgot this. Kautsky wrote a book entitled "Communism and Terrorism" perverting the historical experience and lessons of the Paris Commune and the teachings of Marx. He cried for democracy and freedom for the bourgeoisie saying that the Soviet State was not a democracy like the Paris Commune, which had allowed even the bourgeoisie to take part in its Commune Elections. He also wrote another book, which tried to show from the point of view of "Marxism" that the Soviet State, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, was not the real proper form of the proletarian State because it had rejected formal democracy. The answer to the former work was written by Trotsky in the midst of his military expeditions against the counter-revolution. The latter was answered by Lenin in his book "The Proletarian Revolution and the renegade Kautsky" (Ext. P. 898). The Soviet State is the real democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat, because it is a dictatorship of the majority of the people (who are the workers and peasants) against the bourgeoisie. It is democracy for the

proletarians and the dispossessed. Does the bourgeoisie in its State allow democracy to the workers and poor peasants? Not even the shadow of it.

**58. The difference between the economic and political content of bourgeois and proletarian revolutions—did Bolshevism introduce Socialism after October 1917?—October was not a Socialist revolution**

From what has been stated so far it must have been made clear that the immediate and ultimate ideals of the Communists arise directly from the development of productive forces and the consequent changes in the condition of society calling for a constant struggle towards a change in the production or property relations of classes. In order to bring about the necessary change in the economy of society the class-struggle is fought on the question of political power, since all regulation of class monopoly of wealth or of property relations is done in the final instance by the class State which pours its class content in its law of property. But having conquered the political power, the changes in social economy follow two different roads for two different kinds of class power. When the change from feudalism to Capitalism takes place, the bourgeois productive forces have already ripened within the womb of the old society; bourgeois economy has already developed to such an extent that it only now requires to take political power from feudalism in order to enable its further development and progress. But it is quite a different case with socialist economy. The basis of socialist economy ripens within the womb of Capitalism but the actual transfer of production and distribution on to socialist methods follows the conquests of power by the proletariat. For example, the bourgeois property relations, in which the worker sells his labour power for a wage develop within feudalism, wherein the serf is not free to sell his labour power on the market. It is also possible to find feudal and bourgeois economy prevailing side by side, and its reflex in the State power being shared by a bourgeois-feudal bloc as was found in Germany before the 1918 Revolution. You can find feudal and bourgeois economy living side by side with both the classes



sharing political power in the State. Similarly you can find socialist economy living side by side with a survival of capitalist economy. But there is this vital difference that the State in the latter case cannot be jointly controlled by the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It must be exclusively a proletarian State. What is the specific and vital demarcation between socialist and capitalist economy? This question is answered by the question who appropriates the surplus produce of labour. Under Capitalism the wage-earner sells his labour power, and the surplus value produced by him is appropriated as private property of the capitalist class. Now private appropriation of surplus value by a class is common both to feudalism and Capitalism. That is why both can share economic and political power. But private accumulation of surplus value by a class is definitely the thing that is absent in socialist economy. Socialist economy is a far more serious contradiction of capitalist economy than the latter is of feudal economy. The function of the proletarian State is to bring within the sphere of socialist economy all the productive forces of the given society, that is it must move constantly towards destruction of capitalist relations. Therefore, the two cannot be reconciled within one State, one political power. Now though they cannot co-exist in one State, they can for a time co-exist in one society in the economic field. And this happens for a long time in a petty-bourgeois country like Russia (or China or India in the future) because in these countries agriculture is still petty-bourgeois and the predominating productive force. Even if the State is proletarian, supported by the peasantry, even if it has nationalised all the big industries, the society or the whole economy of it has not yet become socialist. In the socialised sector of economy the worker produces values and his surplus comes to him through his State, that is it does not become private appropriation for further exploitation. But then there is the vast number of private farms where labour is hired and sold and the surplus value produced accumulates for further exploitation. There is there capitalist economy. Unless they are collectivised, mechanised and socialised a proper distribution of *all* goods produced in the *whole* of the society cannot be brought about. The

sale and purchase of labour power of one by another cannot be eliminated. This process can be swiftly carried out in industrialised countries like England, U.S.A. and Germany because there large scale mechanised production already exists in agriculture, along with a highly centralised industrial production. There is, however, one thing to be noticed. Under the capitalist State (especially in a highly industrialised country), though socialised economy cannot be introduced, yet forms of its introduction have already got ready. Highly centralised large scale production with its planned methods on a sufficiently big scale is built up within Capitalism. What socialist economy requires is to destroy the private appropriation of the surplus which compels the vast technique to function only on condition that it can produce profits for the owning class and not for use. Thus we get the following formulations: (1) Feudal and bourgeois economy can exist side by side in one society. Any one of them can be predominant without very acute conflicts. The State can be wielded by any one of them exclusively or jointly. (2) Capitalist economy does not tolerate socialist economy within itself. The State is wholly a bourgeois State, even if a few representatives of the Trade Unions or workers' parties are to be found in the Government. (3) Socialist economy can tolerate survival of capitalist economy within itself. But the State must be exclusively under proletarian control, even if the petty-bourgeois peasantry is found in the Government. At the same time, the movement of growth must be in favour of socialist economy and against capitalist or petty-bourgeois economy, or else the latter will engulf the former. (4) In the first two it is economy that predominantly determines the nature of political power. In the third it is predominantly the political power that governs and shapes economy.

Having seen this we shall now clear a few perversions made by the bourgeois propagandists about Soviet Russia, the perversions which are believed in many quarters in India. These perversions are built by postulating wrong premises, calling them Marxist premises, and then trying to show that Soviet Russia does not specify them. Questions such as these are raised often. The

Communists captured political power. Now when there is Communism in Russia, why is there inequality of wages? Why do they want Capital? Have they not destroyed Capital? How much Communism is there now? They introduced Communism and then had to scrap it out and introduce the New Economic Policy and bring back Capitalism. So have they not failed? When there is Communism why is there the system of wages at all? Why not anybody go and take any thing he likes? If the whole authority belongs to workers and peasants is it not natural that intellectuals should be exiled and killed? so on and so on. Now there is nothing wrong if such questions are framed by workers who may not have read Marxism. But we find hundreds of bourgeois professors and lawyers and socialists in the Second International raising these questions and triumphantly pointing out that in spite of a workers' State there is some economic trouble and no Communism in Russia.

In the first place such questions are unscientifically worded. No Communist ever can say that on the morrow of the revolution or even within a decade of it there will be Communism. Communism is the final stage of society which comes after Socialism, the two are not the same. Under Communism there is no State, because there are no classes left. The productive forces and relations are so organised that there is bound to be plenty of everything and no restriction then need be exercised on the question of hours of work or distribution of things produced. So in all the above questions the use of the word Communism is un-Marxian. Again if you formulate all the questions with the word Socialism in place of Communism, what does Soviet Russia show in answer? The Revolution of November 1917 did not destroy classes. It destroyed only the class State of the bourgeoisie. But it could not destroy the economic and cultural stratification of classes. The Revolution of November 1917 was *not* a Socialist Revolution, in the sense that it did not introduce Socialism in Russia. It only produced political conditions that prepared the pre-requisites of starting the real socialist revolution, that is large scale socialist planned production both in industry and agriculture. The revolution destroyed landlordism. But that

does not mean that it was a socialist measure. Because this was done by bourgeois revolutions also in the 18th century and it helps capitalist economy to grow. The revolution nationalised some industries. Is not nationalisation of industries as socialist measure? Not in all conditions. During the war in many countries, the industries were taken over from private owners and controlled by the State. But the State was a bourgeois State, paid tribute to the bourgeoisie for this temporary nationalisation, which again was in no way controlled by the proletariat in its interest. The Government of India has nationalised railways, roads, post, telegraphs, salt mines, opium etc. Does it mean that it has introduced Socialism? Not at all. But the condition of nationalisation in Russia was different. The State belonged to the proletariat. If it nationalised the factories, was it introducing Socialism? Was it not a Socialist Revolution? No. Because the ownership of some industries may go into the hands of the proletarian State but it may lease out these industries to capitalists as concessions. It then only becomes State Capitalism, with the proletariat in control of the State. It is not Socialism. Next, even if a few industries are managed by the workers' State itself through its Soviets and other organs, that is, even if the surplus produce of the workers in these industries goes to the working-class State and therefore to itself, those industries constitute fractions of socialist elements only and not socialist revolution, so long as it does not become a predominant form of production in the total productive forces and production of the given society. The Socialist Revolution in Russia thus did not take place in November 1917 but started in 1928.

**59. Economic developments and nationalisation—decline from March to November 1917—arrested by the October Revolution—decline during the civil war**

People have got very fantastic notions about nationalisation in Russia and judge the programme of the Indian Communist Party from those wrong notions. Therefore, we shall see what is the progress of nationalisation of industries in Soviet Russia and incidentally the economic measures of the revolution—because

we must not forget that the essential motive of the conquest of political power is fundamentally "the economic emancipation of the working-class to which every political movement must be subordinated".

The economic break-down of Russia which bourgeois propagandists tell us was the result of the revolution really began even before the February Revolution. "By the end of the third winter of the war (1916) the economic disorganisation in Russia had reached its breaking point", writes Maurice Dobb ("Russian economic developments since the revolution") and he quotes Baerlein as follows: "As early as 1916 the railway system was in a grievous condition. Cartloads of fresh roses came from the Riviera for the Petrograd aristocracy, but in the Viatka Government of North Russia there was no means of transporting wheat." While sums amounting to seven to eight thousand million roubles had been borrowed from abroad and while gold reserves had been shifted to France and England to the amount of 460 million roubles in payment of war equipment, the deficit in the State Budget in 1916 amounted to 76 per cent of the whole expenditure and inflation had swollen the currency issue by nearly four times to nine milliard roubles at the end of 1916.

Did the February Revolution and the Provisional Government of the middle classes, supported by the bourgeoisie and landlords, improve matters in any way? No. The position got worse still. One of the first acts of the Provisional Government was to declare a State monopoly of the Corn Trade, in an attempt to tackle the food problem and to prevent the rise in prices of corn. But illegal speculation, in food stuffs and evasion of the grain monopoly grew apace. A worsening of the transport chaos took place. By October 1917 the number of locomotives awaiting repair had increased to 5,500 or nearly 30 per cent of the whole—an increase of some 2,200 as compared with the previous autumn." Between March and November 1917 the currency in circulation nearly doubled, while prices rose as much as 224 per cent. The Provisional Government could not arrest the decline as it could only be done by handing over the lands to the peasantry, who then would release food for the towns and would themselves act as a

watch on the corn speculations and by the introduction of workers' control in industry. But these measures meant expropriation of landowners and severe curbing of the capitalists of which the petty-bourgeois Government was incapable.

What did the November Proletarian Revolution accomplish in this respect? Is it not a fact that the economic decline went deeper during the next two years, followed by a severe famine? Yes, it did. But the Proletarian Government did not cause it or aggravate the decline. On the contrary, it reduced the terrible and inevitable misery. The Bolshevik Government after taking over the State Bank found that the private banks financed the strikes and sabotage of the petty-bourgeoisie against the Workers' State and acted as mediaries for the flight of Capital. Only then was a decree of nationalising banks issued on December 30, 1917. Thus this nationalisation was forced by the political exigencies and not as a measure "to introduce Socialism". The merchant fleet and corn depots were nationalised in February 1918. But it was not till June 1918 that a general decree of nationalisation of firms with a capital of over one million roubles was passed. Thus not a single branch of industry was nationalised before May and June 1918, as an act of general socialist policy of nationalisation. Even this general decree and other confiscations prior to it were due to purely political reasons. One was that the capitalists in order to overthrow the Workers' State conspired with the German Government by which Germany was to declare a large number of concerns as having been bought by her and as such putting them beyond the pale of nationalisation. The second reason was that the Civil War had begun and in order to cope with it several factories and concerns had to be nationalised in order to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie. Prior to June 1918 in 50 per cent of the cases of nationalisation the reason was the sabotage of the owner, unwillingness to continue production or flight of the owners. But the greatest resistance that the owners offered was to workers' control. The workers' factory committees were claiming the right to inspect the accounts and books of the management and to see that no material left the factory without reason. As early as June 1917 that is before the Bolshevik

November Revolution Kerensky had to tolerate this because the bourgeois sabotage and sale to foreigners had begun even then in order to coerce Government into surrender, and complete the restoration of the capitalist dictatorship. In order to prevent this a decree on workers' control was issued on November 14, 1917. Workers' control did not mean nationalisation or confiscation. By Articles 1 and 6 the Workers' Committee was given the right to be consulted on matters of sale and purchase, of fixing the output programme and even of determining the selling price. If the Committee's opinion was contrary to the wish of the owner the former prevailed, subject to an appeal to a superior economic organisation. The Committee had the right of inspection of account books without regard to commercial secrecy, which is nothing but a method of secret appropriation of profits. The Committee at the same time was charged with the maintenance of workers' discipline and Article 7 reserved to the proprietor the sole executive right of giving orders as to the running of the concern and forbade the Factory Committee to countermand them. The effects of this decree were both good and bad. The good result was that the capitalist counter-revolutionary activities were severely watched and crippled on the industrial field. The bad result was that in many cases the workers went further than mere control and seized the factories. Before July 1918 only hundred businesses were nationalised by decrees of the Centre and 400 by local organisations on their own initiative. In some production was disorganised. Separatist, syndicalist and centripetal tendencies grew in many cases. But Socialism is not decentralisation and anarchic production by each productive unit as it likes. It requires strict control and planning, a well-regulated equilibrium between all branches of social production, which is not possible by syndicalist methods. Within the Bolshevik Party there had grown a Left Wing Communist section, which favoured immediate nationalisation of all small and big enterprises directly by the workers. This section was also the one most vehement in denouncing the Brest peace with Germany. This group issued a separate paper of its own and was led by Bukharin, Rykov and others. Lenin called for a cautious policy in nationalisation in as

much as there was no cadre of trained workers or Communist technicians in sufficient number to organise production and distribution. Lenin vigorously slashed the Left Wingers as "slaves of phrases". He called for central control on production, and the occupation by the Germans of the Ukraine called for a speedy reorganisation. The Factory Committees were brought under the control of Trade Unions and these in matters of industrial management were subordinated to State control, at the Third Congress of the Trade Unions in April 1918. This was opposed severely on the ground that it would destroy the independence of Trade Unions and all those arguments used against the capitalist State encroaching on the rights of workers. But these objectors forgot the fundamental point that more work or sacrifices of other kinds, State control etc. were not now exercised by the enemy class for its interests but by the Workers' State that is by the workers over themselves voluntarily.

Another important measure of the most serious character was the repudiation of the Czarist debts by a decree in January 1918. The decree was issued when the Allied Powers refused to enter into peace without annexations and indemnities, and to stop helping the counter-revolution. Foreign capital invested in State, municipal and guaranteed loans in Russia was 5,400 million gold roubles. The foreign bandits had helped the Czar against a revolution with several loans. The revolutionary proletariat already impoverished could hope to reconstruct its life only by repudiating this huge liability, the simple interest charges on which would have absorbed a large percentage of the output of their productive capacity.

The cancellation of debts, nationalisation of businesses sabotaged by the bourgeoisie and abolition of landlordism could not produce their results immediately. On the contrary, the revolutionary disturbance of the normal productive process was bound to cause a decline for which the previous period was responsible to a greater degree than the Bolsheviks. Still during the first year of the revolution the deficit in the budget was 66.6 per cent of the total expenditure while it was 81.7 per cent in 1917 and 74 per cent in 1915. "In the first 8 months of the



revolution the rate of increase of paper money was slower than it had been in the period of the Provisional Government" (Dobb). Had the imperialist interventionists not financed the counter-revolution and devastated the whole country even up to the gates of Moscow, this process of recovery would have gone on more speedily with only "the key positions", of industry in the hands of the State and perhaps those too would have been given for a time to private industry as concessions for some period. But the bourgeoisie hoped to restore its dictatorship over the masses by force and civil war.

**60. Decline and War Communism—breakdown of economy—cessation of civil war—currency—agricultural production and wages**

Most of the economic measures that were introduced during the Civil War are considered by the intellectuals to be the normal ideals and methods of the Communists. Hence when they were abandoned, they pointed to the introduction of other economic measures as failure of "Communism" and the necessity of restoring Capitalism. As has already been shown, the majority of the Bolshevik Party did not want to nationalise any and every business. First it was limited to industries that were strategically to maintain the new political power and breakdown the sabotage. But when the Civil War began this policy had to be abandoned and a system of War Communism came to be introduced. Under it every concern employing over five persons was nationalised. The decree of general nationalisation was issued in June 1918, that is when Civil War had already begun. The number of enterprises administered by the State rapidly rose to 1,000 at the beginning of 1919 and passed 3,000 by January 1920. At the end of 1920 to the State normally belonged 37,000 enterprises of which 18,000 had no mechanical power while over 5,000 businesses were with only one employee. Was this the normal economic need of socialising industry and building up large scale planned production? No. It was an outcome of Civil War, when the petty-bourgeoisie hoped to join the counter-revolution, sabotage economic life and produc-

tion, and bring about the overthrow of the Workers' State. Nationalisation of enterprises with one employee or even a hundred for that matter was a war measure and not the method to bring about socialist society. That is why in our programme you can never find a mention except of "key positions".

In management, the Civil War introduced "militarisation". The anarchic control of individual factory groups was abolished and all were rigidly submitted to the control of the Vesenha, (the Supreme Economic Council). Due to the necessities of Civil War even the Trade Unions were deprived of their powers and made subject to the State. Without strict order and discipline the workers would not win against the powerful landowners and the bourgeoisie. These measures naturally gave birth to a huge bureaucratic apparatus distorting the nature of a socialist State. Bureaucracy is the direct antithesis of Socialism. Neither could the economic life be pushed forward with such bureaucracy. They did not know what warehouses and goods they had nor could they manage them. Business got stuck up in these "bottlenecks" of bureaucracy. The demand of the Civil War on the resources of the State in money and reliable fighting workers for the front dislocated production. The largest centres of fuel and corn supply were in the hands of the enemy. The result was starvation of workers in cities, fall in wages, and the State living on piles of paper money. In the winter of 1919 when Yudenich's guns could be heard on the Nevsky, men fell dead of exhaustion and hunger on the streets. The real wages of the workers in 1918 were 40 per cent of pre-war, in 1919 they were 30.8 per cent. Their productivity was reduced to one-third while the total output of industry on an average was 14.5 per cent. The currency circulation which stood at 30 milliard until March 1918 went up to 60.8 in January 1919. Inflation multiplied three times in 1919 and four times in 1920. The real value of all the circulating media fell from 2,200 million roubles in November 1917 to 152.9 millions in July 1918-1919 and to 29.1 in 1921. While the note issue rose by leaps and bounds, the real value of Government revenue from such issue fell from 163 million roubles to 20 millions in 1920.

Taking advantage of this state of affairs, the Kulaks in the peasantry began to speculate on food stuffs and the masses of peasantry refused to bring food stuffs on the exchange market, as the high prices of manufactured goods and paper roubles devaluing every moment gave them nothing real in exchange for their goods. But grain was an absolute necessity and unless the bulk of the peasantry sided with the revolution, the Civil War could not be won. Therefore, a ruthless grain monopoly and a compulsory grain levy had to be instituted in order to save the towns and the revolution. But who was to carry that out? Merely an armed force in the name of the revolution or a bureaucracy could not have succeeded. It was a question of class forces. The revolutionary class force in the countryside was the poor peasants and the land workers. The February and November Revolutions had helped the whole peasantry to seize lands and drive away the big landowners. But in that process the richer strata of the peasantry began to appropriate the whole land as against the poor peasants, who had no capital for implements to work with. Now in the middle of 1918 the class-war spread to the peasantry, the land workers and poor peasants coming out against the richer and middle peasantry. Land workers and poor peasant committees (decree, June 1918) and Soviets were formed, who helped the revolution to carry out the corn levy and the fight against the Civil War. The richer peasants, therefore, helped the Czarist Generals for a time, until they found that the Generals stood for the restoration of landowners. The middle peasantry did not take any active side and simply waited to see the result. The poor peasants siding militantly with the town workers helped, and beat the counter-revolution. However, when Civil War had come to an end, the method of corn levy had exhausted its possibilities. The sowings had gone down heavily, as the middle peasantry refused to grow things only to be exchanged for paper or a whole crop for a pair of boots. The rate of exchange between town and village lost all basis of incentive to production. In pre-war days a pood of rye was exchanged for about 8 archins of cheap cotton goods. This

rate of exchange in the Civil War had fallen very heavily as is shown below:

	Grain collected (Mil. poods)	Textile goods supplied (Mil. archins)	Ratio of one pood grain to archins of textiles
1919	108	325	1:3
1920	212	180	1:0.85

Now was this policy a normal socialist policy? No. It was the result of the Civil War, it was the result of the millions of pounds spent by the foreign imperialists to kill the Proletarian Revolution. Both the workers and peasants suffered by the war, underproduction, famine and bureaucracy. But this was not the result of socialist policy, not the result of "an experiment in Communism" as bourgeois scholars term it. But an abnormality produced by the imperialist attack. That is why when the Civil War was won, War Communism, grain levy, militarisation of labour were at once scrapped out by the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in August 1921.

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#### **61. Introduction of NEP—alliance with the middle peasantry—educative functions of the dictatorship**

Within the Communist Party there were two wings who opposed the NEP. One was the Left constituted of Trotsky and others, who wanted militarisation of Labour to continue, who viewed the peasantry as a backward mass, with whom a class war is inevitable, and therefore who are to be forced into Socialism. The Right Opposition wanted complete decentralisation of the State apparatus of industry, on the syndicalist lines. This group was led by Madam Kollantai and sympathised with by Bukharin. Lenin who led the majority attacked both these groups and especially the latter as it was a disintegrating factor in the centralisation policy of the proletarian State. The discussions on the question of NEP show very clearly how according to Lenin Socialism was going to be built up. It was not going to be an

overnight process. He characterised War Communism as a "jump" and a "mistake", "in complete contradiction to all we wrote concerning the transition from Capitalism to Socialism." For the capture of power he had advocated "Two Tactics" for two stages. [Exh: P. 1207 (2)]. In the first the feudal autocracy was to be overthrown by the workers and peasants as a whole and the bourgeoisie neutralised. In the second the workers allied with the poor peasants were to overthrow the bourgeoisie and neutralise the petty-bourgeoisie of the middle peasants. After the proletarian revolution had been carried and the Civil War won the third tactic was "alliance of the proletariat and the poor peasants with the middle peasants." This alliance with the middle peasants who now formed the bulk of the peasant population was to be effected by the NEP; the NEP would reintroduce free trade, the free market. It also meant a policy of concessions to capitalists for developing industry. To that extent it meant a certain growth of Capitalism. In the absence of large scale industry, socialised by the State, small scale production has to be reinvigorated. It will give birth to Capitalism. "But have we any occasion to fear this Capitalism provided we keep the factories, the big enterprises, the means of transport and foreign commerce in our hands," asked Lenin and replied 'No'. To those impatient Leftists he answered, "during the Dictatorship of the Proletariat it will be necessary to re-educate millions of peasants and petty proprietors, hundreds of thousands of employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals: to subject them all to the proletarian State and to proletarian guidance to rid them of bourgeois habits and traditions..... In like manner it will be necessary, in the course of a long struggle and under the aegis of the Dictatorship, to re-educate the proletarians themselves—for even the proletarians do not shake off their petty-bourgeois prejudices in the twinkling of an eye, as if by miracle through the grace of virgin Mary, thanks to watchwords, resolutions or decrees; but only as the outcome of a tedious and difficult mass struggle against massed petty-bourgeois influences." "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is a hard fought fight against the forces and traditions of the old society; a fight that is both bloody and unbloody, both violent and passive, both

military and economic, both educational and administrative." The NEP was now a class-struggle, as a Dictatorship of the Proletariat functioning under new forms, not the spectacular victories of glorious battles but slow constructive work. Thus those who think that Leninism is opportunism and a weathercock policy of compromises are great ignoramuses. The NEP was not a deviation—it was the natural outcome of the revolution in a backward agricultural country of small scale production, and every country of this type will more or less have to go through the NEP development. Those who say that we first massacre the peasants and then when in danger compromise with them are simply slandering us. (The address of the late Mr. Langford James.) The Communists are the only Party that stands for the vast mass of the poor and middle peasantry, for this development of small scale industry to supplement the large scale socialist industry till the latter can supply the needs of the whole population, and till small scale agriculture by the voluntary will of the peasantry becomes mechanised and collectivised.

**62. Restoration of economy without foreign loans—scissors crisis—solution by lowering cost etc.—results as at the 14th Congress, May 1925 and 15th Congress, December 1927 of the C.P.S.U. regarding industry and agriculture**

The period of 1921 to 1925 was a period of restoration and rehabilitation. After the introduction of the NEP, Soviet Russia tried to secure Capital from the industrial countries. But they insisted on the recognition of the Czarist debts and restoration of nationalist property, abolition of the State monopoly of export and import trade. The Bolsheviks who were in need of Capital were prepared to yield on the question of debts in return for guarantees of long-term credits, but they were adamant on the question of nationalised large scale industries and monopoly of the export-import trade, through which the superior technique of the imperialist countries batters down national economies of the backward countries. After the defeat of the Allied Imperialism in their attempt to forcibly overthrow the Soviet, a new orientation towards Russia took place and she was eagerly asked to come into

the whirlpool of international imperialist conspiracies at Geneva and of the League of Nations. But many States refused recognition to the Soviet Government hoping that it would be overthrown soon. The first recognition came from Great Britain in 1924. Then other countries followed. When the results of the industrial revival were seen in 1922 and 1923, the attitude of Soviet Russia towards the need for foreign Capital changed. A larger confidence in the creative power of the workers was generated and a policy of complete self-reliance and less dependence on foreign Capital was followed.

We have already seen the depths to which production had sunk during the three years after the revolution. When the Soviet was freed from foreign attacks, the huge military forces were demobilised. The grain levy was abolished and the single agricultural tax took its place. Four thousand enterprises were released by the State and leased out. They were all small scale businesses employing not more than 18 workers each. The State industries were reorganised under industrial Trusts, their co-ordinated control for general policy lying in the hands of the Supreme Economic Council but for all other purposes acting as separate commercial concerns. A new gold rouble was issued as currency. The Budget was cut down and made dependent on real revenue. The result was that gross industrial production which was 18 per cent of pre-war level in 1920 rose to 27 per cent in 1921 and 35 per cent in 1922. In 1923, the Soviet was faced with a serious "scissors" crisis, the industrial prices rising far above the agricultural prices. In September 1923, on a pre-war ratio of 100 the industrial prices had risen to 190 and agricultural prices had fallen to 60. Soviet Russia was again faced with as much peasant discontent as in the days of compulsory grain requisition. This time the State had an organised control over the major part of industry. Party discussions on the causes and remedies of the crisis were opened, the problem thrashed out and drastic remedies applied. The most drastic remedy was in the field of State industry. A liberal supply of currency and credit to the State industry had made the Trusts careless of commercial values, they had instituted monopoly prices, and neglected to secure a rapid turnover of

capital through sales. The indiscriminate supply of credit was cut down. The divergence between wholesale and retail prices, the difference being pocketed by the NEP man was fought through the co-operatives. Costs of production were cut down by retrenchment drive against bureaucracy. Such and other measures closed the scissors within six months. The political report of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. to the 14th Congress in May 1925 shows the rate of growth of restoration thus: *Agriculture*: In the economic years of 1924-25 the gross production of 9 milliard roubles amounted to 71 per cent of pre-war production of 1913, of 12 milliard roubles. Next year it was expected to rise up to 88 per cent. *Industry*: Gross production in 1924-25 of all industry i.e. State, concessions and private was 5 milliards, i.e. 71 per cent of the pre-war 7 milliards. In this productive activity, was capitalist development gaining the upper hand or the socialised sector? This was the most crucial question since on the answer to this depended the answer to the question—will Capitalism return or will the Soviet march towards Socialism? The share of State and co-operative industries in production in 1923-24 was 76 per cent of the total industrial production; in 1924-25 it was 79.3 per cent. The property concentrated in the hands of the workers' State was 11.7 milliards in Capital funds and 7.5 milliards in private enterprise, chiefly in the form of peasant enterprises. The central administered State industry and the Metal Trust made a profit of 142 million Chervonetz roubles in 1923-24. In 1925, it rose to 350 millions of which 173 millions were handed over to the State treasury. Similarly in the matter of the internal trade, the supply of raw materials and grains, the share of the State organs dominated the share of private capitalist enterprise. Thus when in Western capitalist countries they were restoring industry enriching Capitalism and accumulating social wealth in the hands of a parasitic class, in Soviet Russia the gains were being concentrated in the hands of the workers' State to form the foundations of further socialist expansion. When the workers in the West were being attacked in the matter of wages and hours of work, in Russia they were slowly rising to above the pre-war level. The average monthly wage of the workers in Chervonetz roubles was 35 per



head in April 1924 i.e. 62 per cent of the pre-war; in September 1925 it was 50 roubles or 95 per cent. The total sum paid in wages was rising. In 1923-24 it was 808 millions, in 1924-25—1200 millions, in 1925-26—1700 millions. The assistance to the poor peasants amounted to 100 millions.

This state of affairs changed even more hopefully by the time of the 15th Congress of the C.P.S.U. in December 1927. The gross output of the whole of agriculture (1926-27) had risen to 12370 millions of pre-war roubles, i.e. 160.6 per cent of the pre-war level. In industry it was 8641 million roubles, i.e. 102.5 per cent.

We have already seen (in para 31) that the capitalist countries involves in war also regained their pre-war production and even surpassed it. But at the same time the workers' and peasants' share in the increased national income was not increasing. The capitalist recovery was being accomplished there by means of the growth of unemployment, rationalisation, increase in hours of work, strikes and risings, wholesale wage-cuts and increased taxation. In Soviet Russia the growth was accompanied by a well regulated distribution of the national income in favour of the workers and poor peasants. The capitalist class was slowly losing its share even in the small scale trade and industry. In the rural areas the rich peasants living on the rents of land workers and poor peasants had strengthened a bit, but the vast strata of middle peasantry was consolidating its position in a far greater degree without which there could not have been the increase in the production figures seen above.

63. **Construction problems—whence to bring Capital—pre-revolutionary Russia built on foreign Capital—socialist rationalisation—Party Congress discussions to increase industrialisation—collectivisation of agriculture—premature scheme of the opposition—two deviations and the real equilibrium between town and country**

But a restoration was easier because it only meant putting into order what was already there. The Soviet was now confronted with the problem of reconstruction, new investments and further production. Where was Capital for this to come from? Pre-revolutionary capitalist Russia had been built by foreign

Capitalism. The total foreign Capital invested in Russian industry (excluding State loans etc.) before the war was 2,200 million gold roubles of which 32 per cent was French and 22 per cent British. 90 per cent of the Capital in metallurgy and 87 per cent in oil was foreign. A considerable proportion of the cotton mills were staffed by English managers and foremen as we find in India. In the engineering and other works English and German technicians predominated. When the revolution confiscated all this capital on the profits of which foreign Imperialism fattened, the foreign powers refused to give capital to the U.S.S.R. for reconstruction. The foreign intellectuals, technicians and managers, hating to see workers beneath them in political power working with a new spirit of freedom, sabotaged and conspired to destroy industry. Under such conditions it was natural that various groups should arise in the Communist Party advocating different methods of reconstruction. Uptil now the main basis was to allow unrestricted growth to middle and poor peasants and some incidental growth of the Kulaks. A section got alarmed at the growth of Kulaks and advocated a campaign of extermination. They hoped to build the basis of industrial capital on the expropriations of the Kulak class and push forth heavy industrialisation. If this policy had been followed in 1925 it would have meant kindling an immediate class war in villages on a large scale and a campaign of collectivisation. But for this there must be a basis of supplying goods and machinery to the villages, which was not there. It would have meant a drop in food supplies, crisis in the towns and retarding industrialisation. So this policy was rejected. The Fourteenth Congress decided on industrialisation by a campaign of socialist rationalisation, drastic economy without lowering working-class standards. Grain reserves were built up for the expanding industry. Having followed this policy for two years, a policy which on the political field meant a fight against Trotskyism, the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1927 December chalked the programme of making a drive for collectivisation of agriculture. This meant bringing the middle peasants to form collectives of their farms, introduce mechanised production, increase production and consequently their surplus return. On the industrial field the famous Five Year

Plan was adopted, the problem of Capital being solved not by making concessions to foreign Capital but by socialised accumulation of the State industry, by the voluntary raising of productivity by the working-class, by continuous working weeks, by shock battalions of work etc. When the Five Year Plan had sufficiently built up the technical basis for supplying the villages with tractors and tools and when the grain problem was well in hand, the Sixteenth Party Congress decided on the general socialist offensive along the whole line, for the final suppression of Kulak economy for converting petty agricultural economy into a predominantly socialist and collectivised economy. The real socialist revolution was thus begun. Anybody who knows a bit of economics can easily understand why the alternate offensives have to be well timed, once pushing on industrialisation and once pushing on the agricultural front. Soviet economy is not anarchic economy but planned in so far as its conscious direction is not vitiated by a private small scale production scattered in the 22 million small farms. It cannot leave the economic forces to their own working. If it were to push up industrialisation and neglect agriculture, the result would be that the peasants' capacity to produce not having risen, there would be an industrial crisis as under Capitalism. But to increase the peasants' capacity to buy means to increase productivity by mechanisation. Mechanisation cannot take place on isolated small farms. They must therefore be collectivised and then mechanised. Under Capitalism, this process takes the form of ruination of the small and middle peasantry, concentration of farms in large capitalist estates and then their mechanisation. But as Capitalism in decline cannot absorb the pauperised peasant in industry, he is thrown on the unemployed market. Thus under Capitalism the growth either way leads to crisis and ultimately to decline. Under the Socialist State, the conscious direction of economic forces eliminates this conflict. But there is one type of conflict that remains in the Soviet. That is the class-struggle. Collectivisation is met with resistance by the Kulaks, who are capitalist elements. They incite the deep-rooted property instinct of the middle peasants. But it does not work long. The middle peasants finding the gains of productivity obtained in

collectivisation soon join in by millions. Their higher productivity helps the market for industrial goods in the rural districts and for their own in the towns. Thus the two forces create an equilibrium.

Why was it said that the real Socialist Revolution began in 1928? Because it was then that the plan was laid in Soviet economy to make the ratio of socialist production to small scale petty commodity production larger. The Five Year Plan put on the agenda to transform agricultural Russia into an industrial country. Secondly, agriculture itself was going to be brought into collectivisation and socialist construction. Once the output of socialist production becomes or has begun to be dominant both in industry and agriculture the real Socialist Revolution has begun. Such a beginning was made in 1928.

When the bourgeois world heard of the Five Year Plan, it first laughed at the idea, at the immense rates of development planned therein. When under the drive of collectivisation the Kulak elements began to resist the measure, the capitalist world predicted the downfall of the Soviet. The usual Riga stories of revolts were broadcasted. After two years of the Plan this attitude changed and Capitalism in every country has accepted the fact that the Five Year Plan is going to succeed and if it succeeds, it will be a menace to world Capitalism.

**64. Indices of growth—rates of development high but not so the level of development—comparisons—areas under Soviet and collective farms—distribution of National Income—wages—hours—number of workers**

The relationship between industry and agriculture from the point of view of the relative importance of industry in the gross output of the whole of national income began to change thus:

	Share of Industry	Of Agriculture
Pre-war	42.1%	57.9 %
1927-28	45.2 %	54.8 %
1928-29	48.7 %	51.3 %
1929-30	53 %	47 %

What is however of greater importance is the relative shares of the socialised sector and private capitalist sector.

Capital investments in industry:

	Socialised	Capitalist
1926-27	1270 MI. Rbs.	63
1927-28	1640 MI. Rbs.	64
1928-29	2046 MI. Rbs.	56
1929-30	4275 MI Rbs.	51

Capitalism was completely beaten especially in large scale industry, its share in 1929-30 being 0.7 per cent and that of the socialist sector being 99.3 per cent. The rate of development of State industry planned by the Supreme Economic Council grew in 1929-30 to 209.8 per cent on 1926-27. The *rate* of development however must not be confused with the *level* of development. Such a rate of growth is not shown by any capitalist country in the world. But Soviet Russia has not yet caught up with the highly industrialised countries. For example her electrical power output in 1929 was 64-65 million kilowatt hours while in U.S.A. it was 126000 million, in Canada 47628 million, in Germany 33000 million. Similarly in pig iron the output was 5.5 million tons while in U.S.A. it was 42.3 million, Germany 13.4 and Britain 7.7.

The most remarkable growth was in increase of area under Soviet and collective farms. In this the Five Year Plan is being completed in two years. A general comparative statement of the Sixteenth Party Congress showed this. The Soviet farms organised under the grain Trust "will have by the end of the Five Year Plan as much area under grain as the whole of the Argentine today. (1930)," secondly all the Soviet farms taken together will have one million hectares more under grain than the whole of Canada has today. The results in collective farming showed that in three years the area sown in the collective farms increased forty times. Secondly their area shown today is as large as France and Italy put together.

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Such a growth in the capitalist system leads to concentration of wealth in the hands of a parasitic class. In the U.S.S.R. it leads to

improvement in the workers' standards. What sections of the population have how much share in the national income in the workers' State? The share of the workers and toiling peasantry who do not exploit the Labour of others represented in 1927-28, 75.2 per cent of the total national income, in 1928-29, 76.5 per cent, in 1929-30, 77.1 per cent. The share of the State sector which is generally the income of working-class and peasantry constituted 8.4 per cent in 1927-28, 10 per cent in 1928-29 and 15.2 per cent in 1929-30. The share of the rich peasants and town capitalists decreased to 1.8 per cent in 1929-30. This shows that while in the most prosperous capitalist countries the share of the exploiting classes is over 50 per cent, in the Soviet Union it is no more than 2 per cent. That is why in the Soviet Union increased production does not lead to a crisis of over-production as it is doing in other parts of the world today.

As regards hours of work, in the capitalist countries, they are increasing while in the Soviet Union they are decreasing. In 1929-30, 960,000 workers or 40 per cent of the total industrial wage-earners were on seven-hour day. Today the working-day is shorter by 2.18 hours than the pre-revolutionary working-day and will be 3.21 hours shorter by the end of the Five Year Plan. The working-week in Russia compares thus with other countries:

U.S.S. R.	..	..	40.2 Hours
England	..	..	47.1 Hours
U.S.A.	..	..	49.6 Hours
Germany	..	..	47 to 52 Hours
India	..	..	60 to 72 Hours

Side by side with this the real wages increased to 167 per cent of the pre-war level. In the most prosperous country of Capitalism—the U.S.A., the number of employed workers has declined absolutely while production has increased. In England, the number of workers has been stationary since 1890. In Soviet Russia it rose from 10.99 millions in 1926-27 to 13.12 million in 1929-30.

**65. Preparing for war—anti-Soviet Propaganda—Indian bourgeoisie joins in —Paris International Chamber of Commerce on the causes of the world crisis—the Indian professors repeat them—Is Soviet dumping one of them?—Litvinoff's reply**

This tremendous orderly Socialist growth in Soviet Russia acts like a thorn in the sides of the declining world Capitalism. Having failed once in overthrowing the workers' State by armed intervention ten years ago, Imperialism is again rallying its forces of war against the Soviet Union. Soviet ambassadors and officials have been murdered in the capitalist countries; their shipments of gold were seized (by France); their merchant fleet which was carried away in the Civil War by the bandit Wrangel with the help of the British and French has not been returned; the Chinese counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie seized the Soviet's section of the Far Eastern railway; Soviet embassies are raided on the pretext of hunting for "lost State documents" by the imperialists. All this with the hope of preparing the world for war against the Soviet Union. But how are we in India concerned with this? Why should we, workers and peasants of India, celebrate the anniversaries of the Russia Revolution and Lenin days? Why should we congratulate the U.S.S.R. on the success of the Five Year Plan? In the first place because success of the Soviet Union means success of the world's working-class movement. Secondly because, the success of the Plan shows the inevitable success of Socialism, of the revolutionary initiative and creative powers of the workers and the failure of the capitalist system. Thirdly because, it shows how the tremendous increase of productive forces under Socialism alone is now capable of increasing the prosperity of the working-class and peasants, and fourthly because it shows that all this can only be done by a successful proletarian revolution. In India the Five Year Plan is being actively used by the British bourgeoisie to enlist the Indian bourgeoisie in a fight against the Soviet Union. So long, since the Russian Revolution, only an ideological anti-Bolshevik campaign was being waged. When strikes occurred anywhere the Communists and the Comintern were sought out for abuse and attack. But actually, the Indian bourgeoisie had not

joined hands in an economic fight against the Soviet Union and the Five Year Plan. When the world slump in industry and agriculture hit all the capitalist nations but could not hit the Soviet Union, the shrieks of capitalist hatred against Socialist economy became more universal and desperate. In this the Indian bourgeoisie joined, though in fact, it had nothing to fear from the Five Year Plan and its success. The world bourgeoisie opened its new attack against the Soviet Union, in order to divert the attention of their workers and peasants from seeking the cause of the world slump in Capitalism, and attributing it to Soviet competition. The International proletariat was definitely pro-Soviet. Such a psychology is harmful to the war aims of Capitalism. Hence in 1930 the world bourgeois press was flooded with stories about slave conditions of labour in Russia, of political prisoners rotting in limber camps, of priests being persecuted and intellectuals being shot. The International Chamber of Commerce meeting in Paris considered the world crisis and found 12 causes of the crisis amongst which no. 10 was "the forcing on the world markets of large quantities of grain, raw materials and semi-finished products by Soviet Russia at prices less than the normal cost of production" In this meeting the Indian bourgeoisie had its representative in Mr Devid Erulkar. When the whole International bourgeoisie was against the Soviet, the Indian representative did not care to see whether his class in India had any reason to subscribe to the above proposition of the Chamber. But the Indian bourgeoisie has never been known to have shown an ounce of understanding even of its own bourgeois economics and the world forces. In the most advanced bourgeois countries the bourgeois intelligentsia, the professors and experts, help their bourgeoisie in understanding its class interests more intelligently by means of painstaking scientific productions. But in India, the bourgeois intelligentsia has failed even to explain to its class its real class interests, because its master, the Indian bourgeoisie, is incapable of independent class action against Imperialism. The result is that we find a professor of the department of Economics and Sociology of the Lucknow University. Mr. R. B. Gupta, M.A.Ph. D., repeating parrot-like that Soviet dumping is one of the causes of the world



and Indian crisis. Not only that but he betrays the interests of his class by saying that "the boycott of foreign goods has intensified the depression in trade" while in fact the boycott is the defence of the weak national bourgeoisie in India against the cheap commodity production of the European and American bourgeoisie. We find another professor, Mr. G. D. Karwal in his article in the "Leader", December 1930 repeating the same tune and approvingly quoting one writer that "the unloading of Russia products is taking place in many countries and with the Russian Government controlling production and wage scales it is possible for the Communistic regime to underbid the workmen of other countries". In this the writer cleverly misrepresents the fact or does not understand that if there is to be underbidding it is with the bourgeoisie of the other countries and not the workmen. We next find a representative of the landowners in the Council of State, Rai Bahadur Lala Ramsaran Dass putting the following question:

"Will Government state whether its attention has been drawn to the contents of the book, "the Five Year Plan of the Soviet Union" by G.T. Grinko, published by Messrs Martin Lawrence and Company Ltd. London and what steps, if any, Government contemplates to safeguard the interests of those engaged in agriculture in India against the effects of the impending heavy dumping of wheat, oilseeds, cotton and other produce by Russian on the Indian market?" (The "Capital", May 7, 1931) The Hon'ble member engaged in "agriculturing" millions of profits from his tenants was naturally frightened by the tremendous increase in the productivity of Soviet agriculture and began to gasp for fear that all that produce would come here to kill his trade. He still retained some sobriety in that, he did not, like our learned professor, talk of *actual* dumping but of *impending* dumping. However, the Rai Bahadur forgot to read at the same time that all the increase in productivity under the Soviets is not skimmed off the producer but is left to him in increasing proportion. The Government's reply given by Hon'ble Mr. J. A. Woodhead said: "Government have not yet seen the publication referred to but have taken steps to obtain a copy. (It seems they did it free of cost by at once confiscating a few copies under the Sea Customs Act—an excellent practice in days

of deficit Budgets). They have as yet no evidence of dumping on the part of Russia." If the learned professors had consulted this landowner in the Council of State who had the copy of the Five Year Plan or spent a few shillings over the Soviet Union Year Book published by George Allen and Unwin, they would have found that they were purely humbugging the Indian bourgeoisie, the workers and peasants by saying that Russian exports of either raw materials or industrial goods were the cause of trade crisis. These professors quote the high production figures of world productive forces. But they did not care to see what share of the export trade Russia had. Russia was an exporter of goods in 1913 also. In 1928 she did not export even 60 per cent of her pre-war exports. Her export trade in 1913 was 1,520 million roubles. In 1928-29, it was 877.6 millions. She has left to the rapacious capitalists 40 per cent of her former field, at a time when the total volume of world export trade has not fallen but risen. Moreover if these Indian intellectuals had dived deeper they would have found that their country, their bourgeoisie had gained rather than lost from Soviet Russia. India's exports to Soviet Russia in 1928-29 were 24,362,000 roubles while imports from the U.S.S.R. were only 5,775,000 roubles. What were these imports? Only oil which India or any section of the Indian bourgeoisie does not produce (page 304 of the Soviet Union Year Book, 1930 Edition). Though latest figures on this point were not available and though it is a fact that the howling about Soviet dumping gathered strength in this and the last year particularly, the proceedings of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce sufficiently show that the bogey of dumping has not a serious foundation. "The Capital" of 7th May, 1931 quotes the proceedings of the Committee of the Chamber in which we find it stated, "The attention of the Committee was drawn recently to the heavy increases in the imports of goods of Russian origin into India particularly in the case of sugar, timber (aspen logs) soda-ash and other chemicals—The Chamber wrote to Government on the matter saying, 'While the Committee did not suggest that the existing situation was such as to cause alarm it appeared to require watching'!" It should first be noted that in the above nowhere does the Chamber mention wheat, cotton etc.

which the Rai Bahadur mentioned in his question. The Chamber mentions sugar and aspen logs, used for matches, and chemicals. The Chamber is not interested in minimising but rather exaggerating the problem of Russian imports as its constituents are the largest importers from Britain and other countries. Now as regards sugar and chemicals we are completely at the mercy of the international sugar combines, who, by international cartel agreements, fix monopoly prices for export. Last year there were several conferences to fix the export quota of each country at agreed prices. But the contradictions of Capitalism break such attempts and the charge of dumping is now levelled not at Russia but at the Java Trust, a British concern. The Trade correspondent of the "Times of India," an intensely anti-Soviet paper writes, "The Java Trust action in dumping the old crop sugar at low rates is being criticised in some quarters as the Trust was expected to maintain the rate at F.I. 8.25. It is feared that this may create an uneasy feeling among the other participants of the Chadbourne Plan. Germany and other central European countries with bank rates of 12 to 15 per cent are already finding it very difficult to carry the segregated stocks." (29th August, 1931)

During the week the correspondent wrote this the Java Trust sold all their old crop of whites of about 270,000 tons and of browns of about 150,000 tons to Export Houses. "The latter in their turn were offering these purchases on the Indian markets." Does all this sound like Russian dumping? These Leviathan Trusts in sugar have such a hold that while prices of all other commodities crashed by nearly 50 per cent, sugar prices were higher than in 1930.

August 24th 1931, at Karachi

	1931	1930	1929 (September)
	Rs.-as.-p.	Rs.-as.-p	Rs.-as.-p
Wheat white ready	17-0-0	26-8-0	40-4-0
Sugar Java ready	12-9-0	11-15-6	12-10-0
Cotton New York	6.87 C	11.20 C	18.56 C

(October)

From this it can be seen how strong the Sugar Trusts are and how little there is of Soviet dumping. In chemicals, the German cartels and the British combine of the Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. of Lord Melchett with a capitalisation of 62 million

pounds monopolise the whole supply for India. The charge of Russian dumping when thus reduced to figures becomes a myth, a bogey to frighten the gullible. The counter-revolutionary Indian bourgeoisie is not daring to take strong capitalist class action against Australia and wants to steal into a tariff barrier under the excuse of combating Russian wheat imports. But it dares not offend or abuse the big sections of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The following comparisons of exportable surplus of wheat show how Russia which had been the granary of Europe is now very low in wheat exports.

Estimated exportable surplus during season, 1st August, 1930 to 31st July, 1931:

<i>Country</i>	<i>Million Bushels</i>
U S A	240
Canada	352
Argentina	200
Australia	152
Russia	120
Balkans and Hungary	48
India	24

If we look at the actual imports by India, the Indian Trade Journal, a Government publication, for August 13, states that during the three months— April to June 1931, the imports of wheat in India were 80,562 tons out of which 79,150 tons, that is almost the entire quantity, came from Australia. Now if you shout to the peasant the other way round and say to him that his wheat is not sold on the foreign markets because Russia competes with him in the foreign markets, the peasant can easily see, that exports of Indian wheat were greater in 1931 than in the previous two years.

*Wheat Exports from India*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tons</i>
1928-29	114,700
1929-30	13,000
1930-31	196,500

Thus even here the Russia of workers and peasants is in no way a direct or indirect cause of the worsening of Indian exports or imports. India is an exporter of agricultural goods to the world

market. What is the Russian character of competition in this with India? None. Not only from her total volume over the pre-war level she has left 40 per cent of her "claims," but her ratio of agricultural goods has come down from 70 per cent, in 1913 to 38.9 per cent in 1928-29. In view of this the Indian representative, while consenting to Clause 10 of the International Chamber, was betraying his bourgeoisie and doing the work of the Imperialisms of France, U.S.A. and Britain, who chafed at the success of the Five Year Plan because the efforts of the Russian working-class and peasantry, which are now becoming the socialist accumulation of their own industry, would have been available as the profits of the imperialist bourgeoisie, if Russia had been the same bourgeois country as theirs. The lie of bourgeois propaganda was exposed by Mr. Litvinoff, the Soviet delegate at the Commission of Inquiry for the European Union at Geneva. He asked whether it was not a fact that Soviet exports rather mitigated the world's crisis? Did the fact that the Soviet Union was absorbing from 50 to 75 per cent in the total export of certain branches of machine industry in Germany, Austria, England and Poland intensify or mitigate the crisis? In 1930, 53.5 per cent of the total tractor exports of the U.S.A. went to the Soviet Union and in the same year the Soviet Union received 12 per cent of the textile machinery export of Great Britain, and from Germany 25 per cent of the total export of agricultural machinery. It was unnecessary to point out that once the importance of Soviet imports was admitted, it was impossible to object to Soviet exports, which must be made to balance the imports. There was a loud cry against Soviet wheat, whose export was negligible. On the other hand the exports of Canadian wheat increased from 2,350,000 tons in 1913 to 10,900,000 tons in 1928 and there had been an increase of 810 per cent in the Argentine butter exports. Why had these increase evoked no protest? The Soviet was not 'dumping' her products though in some cases her prices are certainly lower than world capitalist prices. The reason was that export trade is a monopoly of the Proletarian State. "The normal cost of production" under Capitalism includes a heavy toll of rent and interest in agriculture of profits of the bourgeoisie of exchange

speculation, and the middle men. The elimination of these under the socialist form of production and exchange was bound to lower the prices. But it cannot said to be "dumping" which is the policy of high prices on home markets and cut prices for exports made possible by high protectionist duties, and this was done by the capitalist countries. For example in Czechoslovakia the price of sugar on the home market was 555 Kroners for 100 Kilogrammes and the export price was 80. In Germany the price was 48 marks at home and 11 marks for exports. The cost of production, so far as wage charges, whether in reduced hours and other amenities or in actual wages, are concerned, is higher in Russia than in India. The Indian bourgeoisie has most shamelessly allowed the Burma Shell group to rule the Indian market by a monopoly price above world parity, which fact was exposed by the Tariff Board on oil at the time of the oil rate war in 1928. It was the Soviet oil at that time that saved the Indian workers, peasants and other poor consumers, crores of rupees, untill the two imperialist groups of Britain and America came to a compromise and reimposed their monopoly prices on their Indian consumers.

- 66. India's trade with the Soviet—adverse balance of Britain—favourable balance of U.S.A.—India's gain of three crores suppressed in official statistics—Government Report and the Soviet Union Year Book—Indian bourgeoisie does not see its own interest—the petty-bourgeois attitude—want of technicians in the U.S.S.R.—migration from U.S.A.—the fate of inventors under Capitalism and under the Soviet—wages of technicians—beauty under Socialism and Rama Nand Babu**

When Indian exports are not competed with by the Soviet, when her exports to Russia are greater than her imports, when economically and politically even the Indian bourgeoisie, let alone the workers and peasants can benefit from a pro-Soviet policy, why do the Indians bourgeoisie and its intellectual agents pick up the anti-Soviet cries? In the first place because the Indian bourgeoisie is more afraid of the Indian workers and peasants pro-Soviet inclinations than of the British imperialist suppression of

its industry. And secondly because it is not strong enough and willing enough to go against the British capitalist dictation. The British policy of anti-Soviet propaganda is greatly in contradiction to her political relations with Soviet Russia. Britain recognised Soviet Russia earlier than any other country. America has not done so until now. Yet in trade what do we find? British imports of Russia for the period of 1920-29 were 165,108,000 pounds while exports were 113,017,000. Adding to this invisible exports in the form of freight, insurance etc. of 27 million, the Soviet Union had a favourable balance of 25 million pounds. In contrast to this the trade with U.S.A. with whom there are no political relations or any treaty as with England, the American imports from Russia for the six years, 1923-29 were 120 million dollars while her exports to Russia were 450 million dollars. Herein lies the reason why Soviet propaganda about dumping is led by Britain. The British bourgeoisie wants to develop trade with Russia but cannot. Her inability disguises as a moral unwillingness to trade with the Soviet. The British bourgeoisie is unable to finance long term credits like the U.S.A. and sell as cheap as Germany and U.S.A. the machinery, tools etc. required by the Soviet. In order to spite herself she can do nothing but shriek against the Soviet, and the Indian bourgeoisie is foolish enough to be cheated in this. Has the Indian bourgeoisie demanded direct trade relations with Soviet Russia during the last nine years, that Great Britain has been trading with the "abominable" Bolsheviks? The Statistical Abstract of British India published by the Government of India, shows that the Indian exports (1928 edition page 487) to Russia to have been 49,51,000 rupees in 1927 and imports (page 475) of 48,52,000 rupees. In the first place we find in this a balance of only 99,000 rupees in favour of India. But the figures given by the Soviet Union Year Book show a balance of Rs. 3,02,73,015 (This is worked out as follows:—Exports to Russia in 1927 roubles 25,633,000 and imports from Russia roubles 4,177,000—Balance in favour of India roubles 21,456,000. Converted into pounds at the exchange rate of 9.45 roubles and then in rupees at 18 pence to the rupee). Where has the huge difference of over three crores disappeared? Why is that trade figure suppressed? Obviously to

cheat the Indian bourgeoisie and the people, in order to make them believe that a direct trade with Russia for the negligible sum of 50 lakhs giving the poor favourable balance of one lakh is not worth the trouble. The Indian bourgeoisie and its intellectual agents have proved dull enough to shut their eyes and not push the question ahead even in their own interest. The Indian bourgeoisie has failed to see that British capitalist re-export to Russia tons of commodities bought in the cheap Indian market and needed by Russia. Russia makes huge purchases of cotton, hides and tea all over the world and from Great Britain. Every one knows that Great Britain does not produce any of these three. How does it then sell them to Soviet Russia? Obviously by buying them from the Indian and Chinese markets. 60 per cent of British sales to Russia are of goods not produced in Great Britain and of this 60 per cent, half comes from the colonies and dominions. As regards dominions like Canada and Australia the Soviet makes purchases directly from them. Even Egypt sells her cotton directly to them. Then who remains of importance except India? A large volume of tea, cotton, jute and hides is re-exported by Britain to Russia at high prices after purchasing from India at low prices and the gain is skimmed off the Indian producers to make up for the adverse balance of British trade with Russia. In 1925 the British bourgeoisie purchased at preferential rates 5 million pounds of hides and skins from India and sold 2,892,000 pounds worth to the Soviet. Has the Indian bourgeoisie ever claimed trade facilities with Russia? The smallest stripling of a nation keeps an independent consulate in India. Italian textiles compete directly here in Indian markets with Indian textiles. The Indian bourgeoisie with its reactionary outlook kindles communal feeling on a Tripoli issue to incite a boycott of Italian textile goods. The Indian Nationalist papers however eagerly boardcasted the communiques of the Italian Consul denying the Tripoli massacres. But they suppressed Litvinoff's exposure of the imperialist lies about dumping; they tolerate false statistics, sell their produce to British agents and do not ask for direct relations with Russia. Why? Because the Indian bourgeoisie is counter-revolutionary and weak.

What does the petty-bourgeoisie, the middle-class that every day sentimentally weeps for India's progress, for employment and



prospects think of the Five Year Plan? Its attitude is of a type that has no class line of its own, because it is not a class at all. The petty-bourgeois has ambitions, and dreams of becoming a bourgeois some day, of becoming "independent" as he flauntingly likes to put it. But in reality he never rises above the poverty line and is constantly tumbled into the proletarian class economically. Naturally he hates the working-class and is ideologically the slave of the bourgeoisie. You can go in any hive of these men and even when they are starving unemployed or hawking two annas patriot-pictures on the streets, they will ask you "how can the workers create art and literature, how can they do the work of intellectuals? Is not art killed in Russia? Have they not driven away the technicians, professors and intellectuals? What incentive is there for creating art, for inventions etc. if you cannot make money and be rich?" These questions have been repeated in every age by every class whose class rule has been threatened by the oppressed class. The capitalist press has frightened the intelligentsia of every country by the concocted massacres of professors and technicians and their flight from Russia. There is no doubt that any counter-revolutionary attempts are punished. The bourgeois State having been smashed its highly paid bureaucracy has been broken up. So the bourgeois intellectuals cannot expect any longer to get fabulous salaries that are allowed even by the cheapest bourgeois Government in the world. There can be no question of the State supporting writers, scribes and poets who write mere nonsense about the pale moon and the pale damsels. The proletariat has no place for pale idling damsels and therefore no need for such poetry. But there are poets, writers, and novelists rising from the proletariat, creating proletarian culture, and they have not to spend their lives sleeping under hedges, catching tuberculosis and seeing bourgeois society awakening to the existence of the great artist just when the great artist is sinking into the grave, starved and broken.

D/- 17.11.31

Let the bourgeois intelligentsia look up the life sketches of the artists of every country and they will find the edifice of bourgeois

art built on the bones and tears of starved genius, Shakespear died in a poor man's tavern. Chatterton was starved to death. Rembrandt, whose works now sell for thousands of guineas at Christie's in London, had to be declared a bankrupt. Kepler's life was a continual struggle with poverty and debt. Success in the lifetime of the artist is a rarity. Yet bourgeois art has not ceased being created. So it is with inventions, the authors of which have died in poverty while the financiers have made millions from them. The modern scientists and inventors are the contracted servants of mighty syndicates who have bought their production in advance. There are hundreds of processes, the inventors of which are kept in obscurity but which yields millions to the Trusts. To give one or two examples. Charles Tellier, who invented a boat in which ammonia was used as a motive power, was sent to a debtor's prison and his inventions stolen. On his release he invented the system of freezing food and thus preserving it. This invention was a revolutionary one. Food products could be transported over vast distances and the shortage of one kind of food of one place could be repaired by imports from another. What happened to the inventor? While the cold storage syndicates made millions, the law courts refused to acknowledge Tellier's rights over the patent and he dies of starvation in 1913. Damsy, a chemical genius, invented dyeing formulas while working in a factory. His employers came to know of this. They dismissed him suddenly one day, raided his rooms on some pretext and seized the notebooks in which the formulas were noted. The law courts decided in favour of the rich company and against the poor genius. The invention of agricultural machinery was stolen by the house of Mackormicks, who have become millionaires on it and also the benefactors of many a nationalist newspaper in India through their contributions of large advertisements (e.g. the Mackormick ploughs). The inventor of the ginning machine, which created a revolution in cotton industry, was robbed of his patent rights; the financiers denied that he had any rights at all. He, Eli Whitney, died in poverty. The linotype machines, which have revolutionised the newspaper plants have the same history. While their inventor, Mergenthaler, was dying in poverty, a set of millionaires fattened

on it. One of them, by name Whitelaw Reid, while an ambassador at London, spent some of his millions on keeping such a luxurious garden at his palace, that Queen Victoria became its frequent visitor. Dive at the root of every great creation in bourgeois society, and you will find its wealth built on the poverty of its real worker. Still inventions have not ceased to be created. Soviet Russia, Socialist society has no need to suppress the genius because it has no millionaires ready to rob the inventor for their private gains. Soviet Russia feeds, maintains and honours its artists and inventors, and gives them whatever facilities they want. They are not required to pass through a school of tuberculosis, the streets and the insults of an arrogant publisher or an employer. The proletarian State welcomes them on the slightest request.

Even taking the question of the ordinary technicians and experts they are given preferential treatment and emoluments. Socialist society does not equalise wages at once. This point was made clear by Lenin long before the Bolsheviks captured the State. Inequality of wages between the skilled and unskilled and of other types of workers has prevailed all along and therefore the statements of the bourgeoisie that inequality of wages is now introduced by Stalin are false. Since 1921 September there have been 17 categories of wages. Before 1921 the difference between the lowest and highest was 1 to 9. It was widened in 1921 to 1 to 5. Categories 1 to 2 covered workers and 10 to 17 covered technical and administrative personnel. The ratio 1 to 3 existed between 1st and 9th categories and 3 to 5 between 9 and 17. What has been done from time to time was still further widened by these ratios in order to attract experts and technicians, as the Five Year Plan requires a large number of these. It must not however be understood that inequality will never be abolished. It is only a temporary measure of the transition stage. The "changed outlook" towards technicians, as it is called, was outlined by Lenin as early as 1921. "To conceal from the masses that the enlistment of bourgeois specialists, who are given an exceptionally high compensation, is a deviation from the principles of the Commune would be to stoop to the level of the bourgeois politicians. To openly explain how and why we made a step backward and then to discuss publicly

what means are available in order to recover the loss is to make the masses learn, from actual experience in working with the enlisted specialists, how to build Socialism. It is necessary to enlist a thousand men, first class specialists in their respective branches, who are devoted to their work, who love large scale production because they know that in large scale production a high level of technical efficiency is reached. And when it is said that it is possible to build Socialism without an apprenticeship to the bourgeoisie, I know that such words come from the psychology of the inhabitants of Central Africa. We cannot imagine a Socialism not based on all the lessons derived from the large scale capitalist culture. Only those are worthy of the name Communists who understand that it is impossible to create or introduce Socialism without taking lessons from the organisers of what has been created by the Trusts. For Socialism is not idle invention but an appropriation by the proletarian vanguard who conquered the power. It is an appropriation and an application. We, the party of the proletariat, and the proletariat can secure the ability to organise the largest enterprises of the Trust type only from the first class specialists of Capitalism". Speaking at the 9th Congress of the C.P.R. in 1920 Lenin said: "The task of the Communists in the State Commission for electrification is to refrain from commanding, or rather not be command at all, but to approach these scientific and technical specialists (who in most cases are inevitably steeped in capitalist predilections and attitudes) with every care and tactfulness, learning from them and helping them to widen their horizon, starting out from the data and the achievements of the respective sciences. It is necessary to remember that, if the engineer is ever to come to Communism, he will do so not in the same way as the underground worker, the agitator and the writer, but through the portals of his science; equally the agronomist will come to Communism in his own way; and this holds good for every technician and scientist in his own field". How does this compare with the statement of the late Mr. James that our method to deal with the intellectuals, peasants and everybody else with whom we might differ is simply to kill him?

The very fact that the Soviet has taken 40,000 American technicians in her employ while the most prosperous Imperialism with half the world's gold in her chests cannot find employment

for them, ought to be a sufficient answer to the carping petty-bourgeois in India about the success of the Soviet and the life under it.

In spite of this we find a man like Mr. Ramanand Chatterji, a rational bourgeois journalist, but Philistine all the same, saying in a meeting in Bombay in June 1931 that the equality which Soviet Russia was trying to introduce would destroy all beauty. Now it is a hard task to find the real meaning of beauty as conceived by an elusive Brahmo-metaphysician and a journalist at that. But on second thoughts I think Ramanand Baboo and those critics of Socialism who agree with him are quite right. Soviet Russia does destroy the beauty of a Philistine Brahmo in a snug palace glorying over how our feudal ancestors invaded Java and carried there the "Pan-India culture", the researches into which give employment now to so many bourgeois professors. Soviet India will not tolerate these hives of Pan-Hindu, Pan-Islam or any Pans and their 'beauties', when within ten miles of them three hundred thousand jute workers starve on Rs. 15/- a month and live in the filth of the *bastees* and yet do not rise in revolt when they find that their neighbour Ramanandji and his ilk pay a year's wages of a jute worker for the beautiful photograph in ten colours of an idler vagabond poet. Ramanandji is again right, for on the filth of the proletariat thrives bourgeois beauty. If the one fails, so does the other. I will only quote Lady Astor who returned from Russia in August 1931 in company with Bernard Shaw and Lord Lothian at present the Under Secretary of State for India. Lady Astor describing Soviet conditions in a lecture at the Liberal Summer School in Cambridge said, "the only drawback about the treatment of babies was that they were so anxious to get the babies clean that they would not allow them to get dirty". Lord Lothian describing peasant conditions said: "While the ordinary peasant lived in a small house full of flies and vermin, occupied also by domestic animals, the ideal collective farm consisted of one thousand families with a communal kitchen, very clean, with competent cooks, five hundred cows in milk, tractors, builders, reapers, a large number of horses, a timber mill, a forge, a doctor, a clinic, an office with typewriters and calculating machines and a creche for

babies". But our learned Brahmo shouts: "I want that hut of flies and vermin. For on them are reared the beautiful palaces of the Bengal zamindars and merchants. From them pour the advertisements of my Review and on the Review thrives my sublime beauty". What is the cure for such petty-bourgeois reactionary breed that will not see and yet blasphemes the revolutionary workers' ideals and Socialism? Lord Lothian says: "There is a proletarian amusement park, shooting galleries, swings and circuses. The shooting galleries are adorned with pictures of Sir Austin Chamberlain and M. Poincare, dark objects at which the proletariat learns to shoot". Will it not be necessary to add some pictures from the bourgeoisie of this country also?

Lenin while commencing to write his book, "Left Wing Communism", quotes Kautsky, who, in 1902, wrote in the *Iskra*, when the Russian revolutionary tide was just rising: "But, however the peasant struggle in Russia may end, the blood of the martyrs who have sprung from it, unfortunately in too great numbers will not have been shed in vain. It will nourish the shootings of the social revolution throughout the civilised world and make them flourish more quickly. In 1848 the Slave & were the crackling of frost which killed the flowers of spring of the awakening peoples. Perhaps now they are destined to be that storm which breaks through the ice of reaction and will irresistably bring with it the new happy spring of the peoples". The November Revolution broke through the ice of reaction in Western Europe as well in Asia but it has not yet brought with it the new spring. Why?

#### **SECTION 4.—The Direction of the class-struggle in the Parliamentary Countries: Paras 67-72**

##### **67. Experience of Russia exceptional or general—will it be the same in parliamentary countries?**

The lessons of the class-struggle, formulated by Marx in the most scientific manner, later on enriched by the experience of their thorough and correct application under the leadership of Leninism, left very little to be added on the question of the bourgeois democratic and proletarian revolution, of the new form

of the proletarian State, of the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the role of the party, trade unions, parliament etc. The newest experience came only from colonial countries. The Russian revolutionary developments, however, were for a long time considered either exceptional or to be applied immediately in all their fullness by the Communists of Western Europe. Post-war revolutionary developments of Europe therefore vindicated Bolshevism, showed it to be a model tactic for all to follow. The question had been already raised by the Mensheviks in all countries that under a full-fledged parliamentary democracy, the transition to Socialism will not require a Dictatorship of the Proletariat, established on the strength of the successful armed revolution, but that power would peacefully pass into the hands of the workers through the successful wielding of the ballot box (vide the evidence of Mr. Brailsford). They argue that there is no parliament, no adult suffrage, no trade unionism and collective agreements in the power of millions of organised workers in trade unions as in England, Germany and elsewhere. Where these exist a violent revolution is unnecessary. The Magistrate in this case also told us that the law of His Majesty allows you to overthrow His Majesty's sovereignty through the institutions created under that law, under the constitution. You can strive to do anything through it, but not outside it. It is a difficult logic to understand and believe that (to take a simile) a robber, who carries a club to keep his head from being broken by those whom he daily robs, can allow that very club to be used for breaking his head, simply because one day he finds all his victims voting for such a procedure. Commonsense will tell that the club simply requires to be seized and broken. In Marx's time this truth did not require explanation. But later on adult suffrage, parliamentary acts, collective agreements and ameliorations received under them had clothed the club with so many cotton paddings, silken covers and embroidery that the workers had ceased to see that behind all these there lay the club, the violence of the bourgeois State, which throws away the paddings and embroidery when its real power is threatened. Imperialism in India tells us, "we give you a constitution, even almost to the extent that our home country has

got. Therefore these revolutionary theories are all useless". Gandhism believes in these promises, agreements and settlements. But does history justify that? Has the bourgeoisie of the freest parliamentary country consented to the workers' desire to transform Capitalism into Socialism? Have those middle class parties and the so-called Communist but not Leninist parties ever stood by the proletarian class interest and revolution?

**68. The German rising—murder of Liebknecht and Luxembourg—Republic with a Social Democratic Government—the conclusion from it**

The imperialist war, after four years of the massacre of workers and peasants and enrichment of the bourgeoisie of all countries, was broken by the workers in Russia. The next step was taken by the German workers. In November 1918 in the first week almost every industrial town had a rising and the bourgeoisie seeing that the soldiers and sailors sided with the workers gave in and started the game played by the Russian bourgeoisie a year earlier. (For the various risings see Diary in P. 2491.) They procured the abdication of the Kaiser and the power was handed over into the hands of the Social Democrat leaders, Ebert and Scheidemann. In Russia when the Czar abdicated, the power was not "handed over" to the Social Democrats (the Leninists). That is sufficient to show that the Social Democrats in Germany were not the Social Democrats or Communists of Russia. They swore in the name of Marx. But Marxism was at that time voicing itself through Liebknecht and Luxembourg, who were released from prison by the revolution. Just as the revolution began with the setting up of Soviets in Russia, the German workers also set up Soviets. It showed that the Soviet is not a peculiarly Russian phenomenon, but an internationally expressed form of the proletarian State. The workers in industrial centres took action to capture power, the peasants in agrarian districts and land workers on big estates seized land. But the revolutionary action of the masses is not alone sufficient for a successful revolution. There must be a strong Communist leadership. In 1905 in Russia there was a mass revolutionary action but no C.P leadership. In 1917 February



there was C.P. leadership but not the right situation. In November 1917 both were present. Germany had had no 1905. It was having it. The Spartacist group under Liebknecht and Luxembourge called for a Dictatorship of the Proletariat. But the Social Democrats as before betrayed. They argued about the collapse of the industry, about the enemy at the door, and the difficulty of a revolution at that moment, as if revolution comes without it at any time. The majority of the working-class had not yet been disillusioned about the Social Democrats, as the Russian workers were about the Mensheviks. Moreover, the only revolutionary group, the Spartacists, were suffering from four Luxemburist errors which have appeared from time to time among many Communist Parties. It paid no attention to the technical preparation for the revolution. It believed too much in the spontaneity of the masses. It considered the peasantry in all stages of the revolution as a petty-bourgeois force against the proletariat. It identified membership of the Party with the membership of Trade Unions unlike the Bolsheviks. The national question was underestimated as being no concern of Communism and impossible of solution under world Imperialism. In spite of these errors the Spartacists were real revolutionaries. The result was that the patriotic bourgeoisie got Luxembourge and Liebknecht murdered by monarchist assassins. Both of them were hammered to death and thrown into the river in January 1919. The financiers of the country helped by the Social Democrats in smashing the Soviets, organised the officers' corps against the revolutionary workers. The Soviets were liquidated and a Republican Constitution was evolved. The Constitution made the National Labour Council elected by Factory Committees, a part of the Constitution. But the Factory Committees, without a workers' State, remained only watchful guards and later became ineffective. Though a Republic was founded and the Social Democrats, the party commanding the largest following amongst the workers, formed the Government of Scheidemann and Noske, what did the masses of workers and peasants gain? The monarchists of Prussia, seeing that the industrial north was getting Communist, migrated to Bavaria, and in alliance with Poland and France conspired to overthrow the

Republic. But the French, thinking it might restore militarism and hence resistance to its own loot, backed out. In Bavaria they raised the "Orgesch", those counter-revolutionary petty-bourgeois guards, whose business was to smash revolutionary trade unions and organisations. In 1871, counter-revolutionary Thiers had taken the help of Bismark against the Paris Commune. In 1919 the German bourgeoisie and counter-revolution took the help of France to behead the German workers revolution. In a class war the bourgeoisie recognises no nationalism and boundaries. When the Allies by the Versailles Treaty demanded reparations, France wanted deliveries of Ruhr coal for her iron foundries seized from Lorraine, the industrialists of Germany transferred their capital to foreign banks and in the name of the fatherland asked the workers to accept ten hours' day and two hours' extra levy for reparations. When the French seized Ruhr the workers resisted the deliveries of coal to France. The German and French militarism after coming to an understanding about the share of each from the exploitation of the iron and steel industry, crushed the workers' resistance. The big finance kings of the AEG, Krupps and Stinnes in Germany were quarreling not about the freedom of German Nationalism but about the percentage of shares that they would be allotted in the new Franco-German mixed concerns to be floated to exploit the coal-mines and steel industry under the domination of the French banks and The Comite des Forges. When they could not agree on the shares, they quarrelled. The British incited the German bourgeoisie to quarrel because the delivery and smooth production of German coal was a setback to their coal. The occupation of the Ruhr, the seizure of plants and furnaces destroyed the German credit and the German Mark. The latter began to collapse just as the Russian Rouble had collapsed during the Civil War. By October 1923 the par value of the Mark to sterling had come down from 20.40 to 80,000 millions. It became impossible to pay wages, or continue production, when the money basis of the whole economy had lost its significance. By October 1923 the crisis had developed

into a revolutionary situation. The Allies expected a Bolshevik revolution. They sent warships in the Baltic to be in readiness for intervention just as in Russia. The Polish and French prepared for intervention from the east and south, if the workers succeeded in their revolution. All the forces of revolutionary outburst were ready, but there was no leadership. For 40 years the working-class in Germany had been organised in the Social Democratic Party. That party had never seen the struggles like the Russian. The war gave birth to a Left Wing in it—the Independent Socialists within whom were included the Spartacists. The Spartacists stood for revolutionary action and later became the Communist Party of Germany in 1919. But they committed Left Wing mistakes. They under-estimated the role of the Parliament and thought that the masses—the workers and peasants—were disillusioned with the Reich, while in fact large sections of the masses expected very much from the Republican Constitution. Thus instead of exposing bourgeois parliamentarism they boycotted it. A large number of workers were followers of the independent Socialists from amongst whom the Left Wing section was amalgamated with the C.P.G. But as yet the exposure of the Left Wing revolutionary phrase-mongering was not carried out. Thus a strong, centralised and well-distributed Communist leadership with its roots in the masses had not been born. In the October crisis the Social Democrats refused to support a General Strike demand. The Communist Party issued a manifesto in which it took the correct line of not advising immediate insurrection. But if partial actions took place they did not particularly disown them. They also called for a thorough isolation of the Left Wing Social Democrats and for the formation of a united front from below. But the German revolution was not given time to collect its forces. The workers' Government set up in Saxony was overthrown, the rich peasantry supporting the reaction and the small peasantry not siding with the revolution as it had done in Russia.

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The insurrection in Hamburg was drowned in blood. It was premature for the fact that several thousands of workers were found actively fighting against the insurrection on behalf of the S.Ds. The German revolutions confirmed the lessons of the Russian Revolution. The bourgeois constitution, bourgeois Parliamentarism is not a cure for Capitalism. The masses must be taught by experience to throw away the Parliamentary machine. Only the leaders being convinced of its futility is no use. For a revolutionary situation there must be an experienced Communist Party. That Party must have ideologically and organisationally demarcated itself from all other compromise parties, and especially the Left Wing parties and Reformist Labour leadership. There must be a thorough technical organisation for the revolution.

After the abortive revolution of 1923, Allied Imperialism saw the foolishness and danger of fleecing Germany by the old primitive method of direct loot. They adopted the course of "reconstructing" Germany as a highly industrialised colony of Allied Imperialism. The German working-class, massacred and maimed in the war, starved and forced to work on 30 per cent of pre-war wages, riddled with famine and disease, sank into exhaustion. From 1923 to 1931 Germany has been reconstructing its capitalist economy on the workers' back, with the glorious result that in 1931 it has applied for insolvency again, with 7 million unemployed starving on the streets. An intensely patriotic republic, an intensely efficient Capitalism, the most efficient technique and Labour at the end of 8 years find themselves unable to reconstruct Capitalism on a stable basis.

**69. The period of proletarian revolutions—revolutions in the smaller countries—France, the classical land of class-struggle comes out as the hangman of revolutions—results of these revolutions**

That the epoch of proletarian revolutions had begun, that Capitalism was unable to reconstruct itself can be seen from the most important revolutions and insurrections following upon the Russian Revolution. A few of them may be quoted.

1. March 1917—The bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia.
2. November 1917—The proletarian revolution in Russia.
3. March 1918—The workers' revolution in Finland.
4. November 1918—The bourgeois revolution in Germany and Austria carried out by workers and peasants.
5. March 1919—The bourgeois revolution in Hungary carried out by workers and peasants.
6. January 1920—The bourgeois revolution in Turkey carried out by the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry.
7. September 1920—The revolutionary seizure of factories by the workers in Italy.
8. March 1921—The March rising in Germany. (References till 1921, P. 2396.)
9. September 1923—Revolution in Bulgaria.
10. Autumn 1923—Semi-revolution of the German proletariat.
11. December 1924—Rising in Esthonia.
12. May 1926—General Strike in Great Britain.
13. 1927 rising in Vienna.
14. The revolution in China began in 1919.
15. The rising in India in 1921.
16. The rising in Morocco in April 1925.
17. The rising in Syria in August 1925.
18. Agrarian revolt in Java 1923-24.

(References, article by Bukharin, Exh. P. 1220).

In all these revolutions the two Imperialisms that poured their millions and used their vast military machine to massacre the revolutions were those of England and France. British Imperialism sent its forces against the Chinese, Indian and Turkish revolutions. The French massacred the Riffs in Morocco and the Syrian rising. In Syria, they bombarded the Velvet City of Damascus for three days and razed it to the ground, and yet this

very French bourgeoisie was telling the world that the Germans were vandals as they had bombarded the cathedral of Rheims and the Bolsheviks had aimed guns at the treasures of the Winter Palace. In Bulgaria the peasant party came to power under Stambulisky, but the peasantry without the leadership of the workers cannot hold out long against the bourgeoisie. A *coup d'etat* of the bourgeoisie killed Stambulisky and a Civil War was begun. The Communists committed there the grave blunder of not calling out the proletarians to aid the peasants. The result was the restoration of bourgeois dictatorship. In Poland, Rumania and Czecho-Slovakia, the French bourgeoisie lent 8 million francs credit in 1923. They were not in cash but in the form of purchases of war materials from France by these countries to arm the counter-revolution in Central Europe. In Italy the mistake was that the opportunist wings of the Socialist Party were not denounced in time, Serratti, the Communist leader sabotaged the carrying out of the leadership of the Comintern and failed therefore to advance for the seizure of political power when the workers began to seize factories. The Government was powerless and was saved only by the treachery of the Trade Union leaders and the Right Socialists, who agreed to hand the factories back to the capitalists, on the ground that the workers were not in a position to work them as the raw materials were held up by the bourgeoisie which had control in other centres. But that exactly is the reason why the base of the struggle should have been extended and not curtailed. The result was that the petty-bourgeois middle-class and the disbanded soldiery which first inclined towards the proletariat went over to the counter-revolution and the fascist dictatorship was established. Fascism started as a party of the middle-class, professing to be both against high finance and against its anti-thesis, the revolutionary proletariat. But fascism has no economic programme, because the middle-class, aided by the aristocratic upper sections of the bourgeoisie and the rich peasantry, ultimately is based upon private property in instruments of production, i.e. upon Capitalism. As such it is bound to carry out the policy of Capitalism. It started with the tall talk of petty-bourgeois economy, something quite new in social

working. What was the result? When the Lira fell in value and currency collapsed as in Germany, the American financiers were called in for help. The Italian bourgeoisie supported by the Americans became the ruler behind fascism. Its only hope now remained in making petty-bourgeois stunts and feeding the people on dreams of prosperity—on what basis—on the basis of militarist expansion and seizure of colonies for exploitation. Thus fascism becomes full-fledged Imperialism; and yet there are in Indian petty-bourgeois leaders who call themselves Socialists and at the same time proudly declare the ideal of fascism for Indian youths. That means that they recommend to the Indian petty-bourgeois to attack the Indian workers and poor peasants to enthrone armed Capitalism in Indian economy. Everyone who recommends fascist ideals in India must therefore be thrown out of the workers' platform by the Indian workers and poor peasants. Every admirer of fascism is a potential hangman of the worker. They must remember that Mussolini too had begun as a Socialist. In India we have to be careful from the very beginning and cannot coquet with such elements on any conditions.

**70. The lesson of the British experience—struggles on the railways, coal mines etc.—the results of Commissions—Tripple Alliance—fall in wages—unemployment**

The Indian workers and peasants are told today to believe in the "satisfactory assurances" of the Indian Viceroy and British statesmen. The whole of the Indian National Congress leadership has been spending millions of the workers' and peasants' contributions to make the people put faith in the "gentleman's agreement." The Government tells the workers also to follow the "gentleman's way" of Geneva and get what they want by negotiations. Has the British bourgeoisie which preaches the above lesson observed any agreements with its own workers? I am purposely limiting myself to the relations and agreements between the British workers and the British bourgeoisie, because it may be said that as conquerors of India the British bourgeoisie might lie and deceive to retain its rule, but so far as its own workers are concerned it must be behaving like brothers with

them. But all such "household" theories do not hold good so far as class relations of the exploited and exploiters are concerned. We have seen how the British workers received a share of capitalist prosperity and colonial loot from their bourgeoisie and therefore abandoned the revolutionary struggle. We have also seen in para 43 how during the imperialist war the British Labour parties, one and all, joined hands with their Imperialism, with the slogan of protecting the rights of smaller nations, of culture and civilisation, of self-determination etc. We have also seen in para 28 how the British bourgeoisie has never been able to secure its pre-war leadership of world finance and the workers have been losing heavily in their wages. I shall now mention the biggest attempts of the British workers to improve their conditions through the bourgeois Parliamentary machine and through direct action and how these constitute the premises on which the Communist platform of the Comintern, the C.P.G.B. and the C.P.I. is raised.

In para 43 we have seen that, according to Webb, almost a revolutionary outburst was developing in Great Britain when the war broke out. The workers were forced by the Second International leadership to stop this class-struggle. When the Armistice was signed the same struggle was renewed and the workers in every industry brought forth their demands. The peace brought back the soldiers, who had to be found a place in the industry on demobilisation, while the industries themselves were under the necessity to curtail their capacity as the war industries would have to be closed down. The bourgeoisie clearly saw the revolutionary implications of the situation and like the most class-conscious very shrewd bourgeoisie with vast reserves that it is, it set to work. A system of "out-of-work donation" to ex-soldiers and civilians was instituted in November 1918. The war-time restriction on wages was abolished and a Minimum Wage Act was passed, first for six months and then renewed in May 1919. On November 14th the National Conference of the Labour Party asked the Labour members to withdraw from the coalition Government. The General Election fought by the wily Lloyd George on the slogans of "Making Germany pay for the war" and



"Trial of the Kaiser" was won by the coalition. The trade unions began their offensive first on the question of hours of work. The railwaymen secured eight-hour day in February 1919. The engineering and ship-building workers got 47-hour week instead of 54. Similarly cotton, iron and other workers in organised industries got the eight-hour day, but not the other sections of the working-class in most of the unorganised industries.

In January 1919 the miners formulated their programme of demands. Along with the demand for shorter hours of work and increased wages, it asked for public ownership and democratic control of the mines. The miners issued strike notices and secured the support of the railwaymen and transport workers forming the famous Triple Alliance. A strike at this juncture of such a powerful combination would have developed into a serious situation. The military forces were impatient for demobilisation and might not have stood by the Government, though Government tried to placate them by the donation fund. The British bourgeoisie has been famous for leaving aside all scruples and entering into negotiations promising anything to tide over the crisis and then smash the opponent. And this they did. They negotiated with the miners, appointed a Royal Commission to enquire into their demands, with the result that the strike notices were suspended though not withdrawn. They also called a National Industry Conference of employers and Labour for the usual programme of class peace. The Government at the same time gave an advance promise that they would scrupulously carry out the recommendation of the Commission both in letter and in spirit. But the Triple Alliance refused to join. Still the Conference and the Royal Commission were successful in lessening the crisis. The Commission even issued an interim report (20th March, 1919) and recommended a wage advance of 2 shillings a shift, a reduction of hours of underground workers from 8 to 7 and give the opinion that even on the small evidence given so far, some system of public ownership or joint control was desirable.

Such a radical recommendation cheated the workers and the immediate crisis was averted. But the railwaymen came out in September on the question of hours and wages. The Government

denounced the strike as an "anarchist conspiracy". In spite of military force the Government had to yield to some of the demands of the railwaymen.

With these struggles the organisation of the workers expanded and the trade union membership rose from 4,189,000 in 1913 to over 8 millions in 1919. The expanding needs of the struggle required co-ordination and unification. So the General Council of the Trade Union Congress was formed for the first time in 1921. But the British workers had not as yet a revolutionary leadership a strong Communist Party. The young C.P.G.B. was formed only in August 1920. The result was that when the Coal Commission recommended the nationalisation of the mines, the Government refused to carry it out. On the contrary the bourgeoisie decided to launch an offensive and suppress the movement. A slump in prices and trade had begun. The German revolution had been smashed, the reparations paid in kind by Germany were hitting British trade and in the colonies the Indian struggle was showing its head.

Uptil now since the war, the mines and railways had been under Government control. It was suddenly decided to hand them back to the owners, five months in advance of the time originally fixed and announced. The miners opposed the decontrol as it would have destroyed the all-national wages system and introduced competitive district arrangements. The decontrol was carried out, the owners issued a notice of wage reductions and lock-outs, which began on March 31, 1921. The miners called in the aid of the Triple Alliance which decided to strike on 12th April. The Government called out the military forces and a Civil War was looming on the horizon. But again the spirit of 1848 dominated. The leadership afraid of the revolutionary consequences collapsed and the Triple Alliance betrayed the miners on "Black Friday" (15th April, 1921). That set back the whole movement for a time. Nationalisation, wages, hours etc. were promised to be brought about through the next fight in the general election. The bourgeois attack on workers' standards commenced. But the resistance had broken down. In 1921 the working days lost in disputes were 86 millions, in 1922 they fell to 20 millions and in

1923 to 10 millions. During these two years the workers lost 10 million pounds per week in wages. Why this failure? Because the leadership had all along advised the workers to rely on negotiations and class collaboration, to keep faith in the bourgeois Government, the Royal Commission etc. The leadership of the Second International Socialists sabotaged the struggle at this point, hence the failure. Hence the Government appointed Commissions and Committees to tide over the crisis and afterwards when the crisis was over it attacked the workers. The extent of this attack can be seen from the single fact that the total weekly wages change between 1914 and 1920 was an advance of 13,332,300 pounds and the decrease since 1920 to 1923 was 10½ million pounds. Whereas the cost of living from 1914 to 1920 had risen from 100 to 269, the wages had risen to 226.6. At the end of 1923 the cost of living had fallen to 177 and the wages to about 130 to 140. (L.R.D. Monthly Circular for January 1926, page 8.) Yet British Capitalism had failed to restore its economy or give work to all. By the fall in wages, goods become cheap, work increases and workers get work, so argues the bourgeoisie. But the unemployed army has become a permanent one in England as in every other country. Since 1920 it has never gone below one million.

**71. British workers tried two weapons—Labour Government and the General Strike—the achievements of the Labour Government—its fall**

The working-class had not yet definitely experienced the result of two weapons, which, they had been taught, would be the most effective, in giving them political power and bring about socialist society. One was a Labour Government in Parliament, and the second such a mighty all-national General Strike that the whole bourgeois socialist order would come to a standstill. The British workers had the opportunity to taste the fruits of both these weapons in 1924, 1926 and 1929. Do those lessons tell us to give up Marxism as the only weapon to change production relations in society and free its productive forces for further development?

The Labour Party had 191 members in the Parliament in 1924.

In January of that year, the Conservatives resigned the Government and the Liberals having agreed to support the Labour Party, the first Labour Government of England came into being. While in opposition the Labour Party had denounced the capitalist robbery of Germany by the seizure of Ruhr and heavy reparations. It had denounced the refusal of the bourgeoisie to recognise Russia, the only Workers' Government in the world. The whole British Empire, the European Continent, in fact the whole world looked with interest at the Labour Party forming the Government. The Communists only did not expect the Labour Party to do anything that would break the capitalist system inside the country or the capitalist foreign relations of Great Britain. The Labour Party in the T.U.C. had already allowed the workers to be duped by Coal Commissions and Industrial Peace Conferences. The Party could not be expected to change the capitalist foundations and relations of British economy. Still the Communists supported the Labour Government, and asked for its formation because, unless it had become a fact and the workers confronted with the living fact of it, unless it had its run to expose its futility, the idea of realising Socialism through a parliamentary vote could not be got out of their minds. Hence Lenin had said that the Communists would support the Labour Government just as the rope supports the man who has hanged himself. (Ext. P. 975.)

India knows very well what the Labour Government of 1924 did to its bourgeois nationalist movement as also the workers' movement. The first Labour Government attacked the Communist movement and the Communist International by instituting the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case. They imprisoned the revolutionary youths of Bengal. The Labour Government left the Bombay textile workers' strike "in the hands of the Government of India and saw no reason to interfere with it", as they said in an official statement. The Labour Government in the approved imperialist style warned China against taking action against British capitalists in China and sent its gunboats to massacre the Chinese Revolution. It threatened Mexico and showed to Egypt the warships in Alexandria.

(The Prosecution Counsel, the late Mr. Langford James, as if in pity for the fate of Mr. MacDonald, had read out in his address to the Court several extracts from the *Inprecorr*, in order to show what an abominable set the Bolsheviks were in the Comintern who wrote about MacDonald and prophesied his renegacy to the cause of the working-class.) The first Labour Government had elected Mr. MacDonald as its first Premier and Foreign Secretary. In the hands of the most expert and reactionary bureaucrats of the Foreign Office he behaved worse than Lord Curzon towards India, Russia and Germany. On assuming office the question of treaty with Russia was forgotten until Neil Maclean opened the question publicly. The London Labour Party was about to threaten a protest meeting and MacDonald had to yield and give recognition to the Soviet. But he was a puppet in the hands of the Foreign Office. They flattered his egomania, they praised him and got very important work done exactly in the traditions of Imperialism. "For this egoist was to prove at bottom as weak and unstable a man as that one of whom Mrs. Elphinstone said, 'he has a leg!' 'He had a leg' will serve for MacDonald's epitaph. His inevitable abbey statue will, one trusts, show him in Court dress". This was written not by the *Inprecorr* or any rabid Bolshevik but by one who signed himself as "U.D.C." and who was probably his colleague in the Cabinet in the first Labour Government. Though recognition was given to Russia he never sent an ambassador and pushed energetically with the Exports Credit Scheme. In the traditions of the Foreign Office he even forgot that he was once a Socialist. He wrote pompous letters to Tchicherin and Rakovsky. In a public speech he called the President of the U.S.S.R., "a Mr. Roykov", as a man not of "real political authority". In one letter he wrote that a settlement with Russia would be reached "Satisfactory to the people of Russia and *to us and our subjects*." It is a matter for wonder, writes U.D.C., that he never began a note, "We, James Ramsay, by the grace of God". Think of the workers' Socialist leader writing himself "us and our subjects". He had already become in his ideology an imperialist oppressor. In his relation with the arch Imperialist Poincare, he was fawning and currying favours. He promised full co-operation in the

French occupation of the Ruhr, enforcing the Dawes Plan on Germany, and he, a Socialist, declared that Germany must be forced to pay heavy reparations, else she might compete with "our industry". Such a Premier the Indian bourgeoisie applauded, in the hope that they would be granted a capitalist Swaraj without safeguards for British Imperialism.

As regards the workers themselves, the Government had failed to do anything to better their conditions. The unemployment figure remained over a million as before. There was a textile workers' strike which was only patched up. Only a direct attack of Government on the Trade Unions was stayed which allowed them a few opportunities of consolidation. The fall of the Government was cleverly engineered by the bourgeoisie through its Foreign Office, who arranged the clever forgery of the Zinovieff Letter and MacDonald's bungling about it. The Government might have changed but the bureaucracy of Capitalism was still there running its capitalist system. The experiences of the Labour Government thoroughly justified the Marxist doctrine that for any change in the capitalist system the old State with its bureaucracy has first to go

**72. The Coal crisis—the Samuel Commission—Government preparations and T.U.C. bungling—secret conversations—Soviet help refused—British experience confirms Russian experience—the vote cannot stop attack on wages—that the General Strike without a revolutionary party has no use—Leninism derived from history**

With the fall of the Labour Government, the British workers, under the reconstruction drive of Capitalism turned towards the Left and headed for the General Strike of 1926. Capitalism in Central Europe had succeeded in beheading all the revolutionary forces and had started on the road of partial reconstruction. It was necessary now for British Capitalism to smash the radical working-class forces. The revolutionary forces of the British workers have always been the miners, and every offensive of Capitalism has begun with the miners. On June 30, 1925 the mine-owners gave one month's notice of abolition of the national

minimum of wages, reducing wages by 13 to 49 per cent and increasing the hours of work to eight. The Miners' Executive refused to accept the proposal. The Communist Party had been warning the British workers of the impending attack for months and months previously, pointing out that the attack on miners was the beginning of an attack on the wages of all workers. The miners were now supported by the Trade Union Congress, the railway-men, transport workers and engineers. A strong quadruple alliance was formed and a big battle seemed to be approaching.

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The Communist Party, however, pointed out that unless workers defence corps were set up, unless a strong leadership was built in every local the great action would collapse. The immediate lock-out, however, was averted by the Government guaranteeing 20 million pounds subsidy to the mine-owners, who would then continue the present scale of wages and hours. The compromising leadership of the workers as represented by the T.U.C. and MacDonald was elated with the action of the Government. They spoke of "bloodless victory" and agreed to help the Commission which Government appointed to enquire into the miners' conditions. But, as the Communist Party alone pointed out, the subsidy and the truce were only a screen behind which the Government prepared its forces. Police forces and the military were organised to meet the strike situation on a large scale. The fascist organisation for maintenance of supplies was set up. During all this time the Labour Party and the truce remained inactive and abused the Communists for raising baseless bogeys of capitalist attack, while the shrewd Mr. Wheatley declared, "that we were rapidly moving towards a revolutionary crisis, when the fate of the working-class would depend upon whether their working-class brothers in the army and navy would shoot them or live with them." The Government showed itself alive to this situation and attacked the Communist Party and sentenced 11 of its leaders for inciting the army to overthrow the Government and join the revolutionary workers.

The Samuel Commission reported in March, 1926. It turned down the demands of nationalisation and it gave some very scientific reasons which ought to have taught even the Socialists some sense. It agreed with the statement of the Miners' Federation that mining concerns are now complex heavy industry units, which comprise electricity, gas, oil, chemical products, blast furnaces and other activities. When the huge capitalist concerns are so interlocked, what meaning does a proposal of nationalising only one of them carry. The Commission said: "By removing these mines into State ownership the very sections of the industry which already approached the standards that are likely to prevail in the future would be the most injured. Existing combinations would be disintegrated and a serious obstacle would be raised against further integration". In plain language the Commission told the Socialists that modern monopoly Capitalism is so interlocked that you cannot nationalise only one part of it; and if you argue that the part which is highly developed only should be nationalised then the capitalists would not develop the other. The MacDonald Socialists surrendered before such an argument, because the only answer to this is that the capitalist economy itself has to be overthrown, ruling out the policy of "serious obstacles" and sabotage to further development under Socialist Nationalisation. On the publication of the report all the pseudo-Socialists refused definitely to state at once that they rejected it and that a serious fight would have to be given. Only the C.P.G.B. called for a definite organised united front against the attack. On April 30th 1926 the mine-owners tabled their demands of eight-hour day and 13 per cent wage-cut. The Trade Union Congress took the stand that the miners would not accept reduction *before* the reorganisation of the industry, implying that they would do so (or at least the leaders would do so) at a later stage. But the Conservative Government intent upon smashing the Union refused to allow the leaders to save their faces. The General Strike was in fact begun by the workers themselves over the heads of their hesitating leadership. The printers of the Daily Mail refused to print an article containing a violent attack on the workers, and went on strike. The Government considered it as an act of



hostility and broke off negotiations. The General Strike began on 3rd May, 1926.

The General Strike, the great ideal of every Trade Unionist which was to bring everything to a stand still, and thus force Government to yield to the demands of the workers, had at last come. It was being conceived for the last 75 years since the Chartist Movement. At that time it was to be brought about for a definite political issue, for gaining political rights for the working-class. The attainment of franchise had removed that issue. Now it was purely for the wages and hours of the miners. The strike, threatened since the war terminated, had at last come and revealed the vast incapacity of the leadership, the absence of any really sincere organisations on a nationwide-scale closely and solidly interlinked to function in a crisis. The General Strike revealed that each group of workers, each organisation, though appearing to be of vast dimensions was like the vans of a railway train, scattered over several railways and incapable of forming a single train except after immense loss of time, and unavailable when required. The leadership at the top simply thought of "somehow" ending the dispute. The local groups did not know what the top was doing or thinking and what exactly was required to be done. On the call they simply struck work and asked everyone else to strike, which everyone did. Each day the strike spread and every service and industry stopped. The Trade Union leaders called out the printing workers and in loyalty to bourgeois fairness to show how "good boys" they were, they closed their own paper and press also. When the workers clamoured they tried to issue the 'British Worker' as a small sheet, but the Government raided the press and allowed the paper to appear only after censoring. The Government took over the "Morning Post" plant and issued their own paper, "The British Gazette". The Trade Union leaders again bungled and offered the Government the co-operative food supply services. The Government refused and under military protection made its own arrangements. The leaders prohibited picketing, but the workers refused to obey and prevented blacklegging. The Government called out the students

of the universities, clerks, and petty-bourgeois girls to become volunteers and run the trains, buses etc. The T.U. leaders had not even a Defence Corps to protect their pickets. We have had in this Court a witness (Mr. Fordham, P.W. 16) who is now a Magistrate in U.P., who was at that time a student in Cambridge and took part in breaking the strike and is proud of it (vide his evidence). Blacklegs who fought against the workers in Britain, are bound to get their rewards in the colonial loot. The British Government in England behaved towards its workers just as ruthlessly and armed the petty-bourgeois fascists thus to shoot the workers as ruthlessly as they do today in India, the latest example of which is the White Terror they are practising in Dacca against both workers and radical sections of the middle-class.

When the strike had lasted four days and even showed signs of intensifying the Government called it "illegal", and an attack on the constitution of the Kingdom. The T.U. leaders trembled and protested their loyalty to the bourgeois Government and to the bourgeois Parliament. On 8th May, Sir Herbert Samuel, the Chairman of the Commission, whose report was the immediate cause of the strike, returned to England and saw some of the T.U. leaders. Secret conversations took place. The workers never knew what they were. On 11th May, the workers were trying to extend the strike to the engineering and ship-building trades also, while the leaders were talking with Sir Herbert. On 12th May suddenly the announcement was made that the strike was called off. The workers for a time were puzzled. Then they thought the Government might have yielded, so magnificent and powerful had been the response of the workers. They held meetings to celebrate the "victory". The capitalist press called it an "abject surrender", and the T.U.C. General Council called it an "honourable settlement". We in India now know what an honourable settlement means. The General Council had negotiated with Sir Herbert in his "private capacity" only, as he himself put it. He had no instructions from Government to negotiate. The T.U. leaders accepted a scheme of wage reduction and all that was connoted by the Coal Commission. Not only that. They had not even stipulated

that the existing Trade Union agreements would continue. So that when the workers went to resume work the employers exacted new agreements. The miners after the termination of the General Strike continued their struggle but were beaten in the single-handed fight against the strength of the whole bourgeois State machine. (Some of the references—P. 901.)

The workers of every country (including India, Exh. P. 1381) had rallied to the help of the General Strike, the greatest help having been rendered by the Russian workers. But the T.U.C. General Council, afraid of capitalist ill-will, refused to receive the money sent by the Russian workers. It is therefore quite natural that when the Indian workers accept the fraternal help of the workers of every country including Russia, that the General Council of the British T.U.C. should denounce us. The slave of Baldwin assuming the airs of the boss cannot but denounce the disciples of Leninism.

The British General Strike shows that the widest strike of all industries cannot automatically overthrow the capitalist system, that in the strictly economic strike the capitalist State comes to the aid of the bourgeoisie. Every big strike becomes a political strike. Without a revolutionary organisation and seizure of power a General Strike alone can never succeed in overthrowing Capitalism. The conclusions are that the Russian experience holds good even in the freest bourgeois country in the world; that the ballot-box does not help you even to defend your wages from the attacks of the bourgeoisie. That even the most powerful General Strike without a revolutionary party and revolutionary action does not succeed even in its economic aims, let alone the political, that before the workers can become revolutionary they must be rescued from the leadership of the Menshevik, the petty-bourgeois Trade Unionist and Labour aristocrats. The freest Parliament is a speculators' den (as Mr. Bernard Shaw calls it) and can never lead to Socialist Society. It may elect pseudo-Labour Governments but it cannot change the fundamental class relations and destroy the capitalist organ.

**PART II**  
**THE SOCIAL BASIS OF THE CLASS-STRUGGLE**  
**IN INDIA**

**SECTION 1—Democracy and British Dictatorship in India:**

**Paras 73-81**

**73. Role of the individual in the Indian conquest negligible—conquest of superior social groups by the inferior—British not inferior—our standards applied to them are subjective and therefore wrong—no return to pre-British era**

We have seen so far the activities of the human social groups in other parts of the world, their struggle with nature resulting in inventions and increase of immense productive powers, the private appropriation of the increased wealth of society by a class, at one time the feudal class and at another the bourgeoisie, the socio-political class-struggles arising out of such appropriation, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, its new socio-political outlook and the method of reconstruction of society on Socialist basis in Russia. We shall now see how much of this is applicable to the Indian conditions in which we have worked.

When all this mighty drive of social development and revolutionary class-struggles for a happier world had been going on, the independent feudal economy of India was seized and crushed in the steel wheels of British Imperialism. Feudal India of 18th century was stagnant, while bourgeois Europe was constructing the giant wheels of capitalist production to storm the vast closed lands of Asia. We have seen in para 21 the frivolous analysis of the history of Indian conquest by bourgeois writers, who see our fall either in superstition of the priests or the treachery of unpatriotic Sardars, Nawabs and Peshwas.

While separate battles can be explained by such reasons, the whole epoch of the conquest or subjugation not only of India, but of China, Africa, Egypt, Turkey, Persia, to the bourgeoisie

of Europe and America cannot be explained except by the development of the superior technology alias civilisation of their bourgeois society. The historical materialist method of Marx (which the late Mr. James in his address to the Court said is not of any use to the Bolsheviks) alone shows us the right way, a method now being adopted though with some adulteration by the bourgeois writers also. We were conquered by force, by violence. But this violence was superior to ours, was the bourgeois violence of Britain against the feudal violence of India. It was neither just nor unjust because it was a force that was submerging the world like a flood from the excess of productive forces, that must find markets if it is to progress and sustain itself. Hastings may have been a scoundrel and a murderer when he despoiled the Begums of Oudh and hanged Nand Kumar. But he did not succeed in India because he was so and we were excellent religious angels. His successor Cornwallis when matched with the young and virile bourgeoisie of America had failed. The young and unadulterated bourgeoisie of U.S.A. had stood against the partially feudal bourgeoisie of England. But Cornwallis succeeded against the old and stagnant feudalism of India. A scoundrel in both the places—yet when contending against two types of technology, he produced two different results. Marxism does not neglect to count the human intellectual quantity as a definite quantity in the shaping of history and its separate events. But it assigns it a negligible role in relation to a whole epoch, an appreciable role in relation to its component separate events, but never the predominant role of the "sole cause" in the complex of social history. That place is assigned to the totality of productive forces and production relations. I do not mean that every conquest is a result of superior technology attacking an inferior one. There are instances of the conquest of a culturally advanced social group by a barbarous one. But almost every such conquest has resulted in the conquerer having ended by being merged in the conquered group. Our historians cite hundreds of instances wherein the invaders had been successful but ultimately merged into the social order they had conquered. Our historians at the same time say that

the Britisher had conquered us and, though culturally of an "inferior civilisation", had not yet been submerged in Indian society but had succeeded in keeping aloof and destroying our "old civilisation", culture, religion etc. Now when these historians called the "British" civilisation (it is not British as such but capitalist) inferior, their standards of measurement are the subjective, moral or ethical notions and as such quite unreliable. The Hindus do not kill a cow and the British do. But such standards are useless, as can be seen from the fact that Hindu Society itself at an early stage in its development ate cows and bullocks. Ethical Codes are basically the prejudices of the dominant class, which imposes them on society as their own safeguards against the revolt of the exploited. As the process of ideological development is intensely complex and subtle, it does not serve as an objective material standard of measuring superior or inferior civilisation. The Indian historian calls the British civilisation inferior from the standpoint of his feudal Imperialism, which spread its culture to China, Java and other countries. The remnant of that psychological arrogance, coupled with an important, inferior economy that has saved the social group from complete extermination like the Red Indians because of its vast population, accumulated reserves of wealth and an old agrarian feudal; economy entrenched on fertile land makes us dream of "giving messages to the west" and spiritual leadership. The Imperialists cheer us, when we indulge in this gaseous imaginery superior leadership, so long as it does not attempt to take the concrete material socio-political shape. Let us once for all admit that we have been conquered by a superior economy, by superior productive forces which have called violence, subterfuge, massacre, murder and diplomacy to their aid, just as Indians also have done in relation to other countries in their past history. Let us once for all admit that its productive forces in the end lead to a higher stage of social development, that there is not going to be a "return" but a march forward by assimilating all the achievements of the bourgeois technology that has conquered us.

**74. Has Britain civilised us?—introduction of industries—feudalism not destroyed—degeneration of revolutionary slogans—1857, fight of a revolutionary class under reactionary leadership—what we would have done in 1857?**

Does this mean that British Imperialism has "civilised" us? In Europe when the economically powerful bourgeoisie overthrew its feudal order and destroyed the feudal relations, it liberated the forces of production in its own country. In some colonial possessions till the war the imperialist export of capital resulted in development of industries, a growth of the colonial and dominion bourgeoisie which soon became politically powerful enough to refuse to be expropriated in the interests of the mother country. British Imperialism in India did not carry out this task of developing the productive forces of the country. It deprived the feudal order of its political power but retained its socio-economic character, making it serve the needs of the imperialist country. To serve the needs of British industry means to serve as its suppliers of raw materials and markets. If it were to develop as a bourgeois capitalist country it would be an industrial power competing with the imperialist countries. Imperialism so far as it can prevent it will not carry out such a suicidal function, though in the very act of transforming a huge feudal economy into a raw material base of modern industry, a certain amount of industrialisation does take place. (Reference P. 90)

We consider the British conquest as an aggravated evil for two reasons. If as a capitalist civilisation it had properly destroyed the feudal order, it would not have been such an evil; because in that case it would have generated the proletariat, a revolutionary force that would have in time overthrown it. The British conquest started by destroying the political power of the Indian feudal emperors, purely as a proposition of merchantile loot in the first instance. It was nothing but simple violent primitive robbery. However when it embarked on the campaign of destroying the power of the princes and lords, the work was let half done due to a series of historical impediments. One was the threat of Napoleon, necessitating in some cases an alliance with the princes; secondly

the opposition of feudal lords in England to a thorough destruction of their class allies in India; thirdly the numerical strength of the princes and lords and the rising of 1857. These three prevented the thorough disappearance of the princes and their allies and his abortion has now choked the new India in a peculiarly horrible manner, a small representation of which can be seen in the proceedings of the Round Table Conference.

The late Mr. Langford James did us a service, when in his opening address he brought to the forefront the slogans we shout every day. Revolutionary slogans by the prisoners of Imperialism in India owe their birth to the indomitable spirit of the great Bhagat Singh and Dutt. But I am sorry to say that those who profess to follow the great revolutionary have failed to understand his later development and have degraded the revolutionary slogans many a time into a shout of reaction. Slogans of the prisoners are not jokes nor lung exercises. They are not veils to shut out in a loud noise your innermost pain of suffering. You do not shout slogans to tell the world how cheerful or romantic you are in sufferings. Slogans in a way are a revolutionary duty. The revolutionary duty in such a case is to keep up the correct self-training from degeneration, and the correct leadership. In a simple concentrated manner they represent your revolutionary class outlook in relation to a whole movement or its separate events. "Down with Imperialism" and "Long live revolution" summarise the aims of the national movement for Independence. But they have been so vulgarised now that even the reactionary supporters of the Round Table Conference shouted them at the Ballard Pier in Bombay and some introduce even a communal riot with them. Therefore they have to be amplified. We amplify by adding, "Up with the rule of the proletariat and peasantry," "Long live the Communist International". Now it will be very difficult to confuse us and our aims when one hears these slogans with any other school of revolutionaries. The followers of Bhagat Singh have forgotten that he had blossomed into a socialist and was on his way to becoming a Leninist (1930) though he was confused in his ideology for want of proper literature. But none could have expected from him in 1931 the slogans "Long live Bahadur Shah"



or the observance of the "1857 Day" as some of his followers have been doing. Such slogans and such Days betray the class outlook, the romanticist in his hatred of the present rule trying to idealise rank reaction and becoming an utopian. Why so? Because the movement of 1857 is not scientifically understood. We are simply deceived into idealising it by its anti-British character. The war of 1857 was a war of reaction of feudal lords to restore their former role of uncontrolled exploiters of the peasantry. The peasantry and artisans, in so far as they supported them, were strengthening a new their weapons of feudal slavery. They fought under their former oppressors' banner because the new British rule had introduced money rents and was ruining handicrafts without substituting industry in their place. Thus the class which ordinarily would have played a revolutionary role was supporting a reactionary war. What has been the outcome of 1857? The present native states, the present taluqdars and jagirdars and the strongholds of feudal oppression allied with British imperialist exploitation are the legacy left by 1857. I would have considered it a great historical service if Dalhousie had succeeded in wiping out all these yellow patches from our map. In that case we would have been saved the trouble of carrying out one more task in the revolutionary programme—that of destroying these reactionary strongholds of princes—and we would have better concentrated on Imperialism alone. That is why we do not shed tears over the fall of Bahadur Shah, though we may over his poems, if you like, or over the last of the Peshwas. I should also dispose of one fantastic question that is likely to be raised. If a Communist had been alive in India in say 1800 or 1850 would he then have helped the British into consolidating their rule over India because they represented a bourgeois economy which according to Marxism is superior to feudalism. Now it is not possible to project the historical forces of one epoch into another and begin arguing about the resultant complex. History is not a chemist's tube. What we can do is only to analyse the process with the given forces and later developments. Still this much can be said in answer. The existence of a Communist pre-supposes a certain development of the proletariat. If it had been there it would have fought both

against the British and the Indian feudal forces. There would have been no question of choice. Such hypothetical questions can best find their answer in the "1848 of Europe".

**75. Do we deplore British conquest?—effects of it—first Company loot—reasons for Crown control in 1858—British Imperialism expands from the Indian base—commercial and legal forms of loot—why British writers expose British doings in India—sum total of the results of British rule**

Does this mean we do not deplore the conquest of India by Britain? No, it does not mean that. Because in the course of ordinary development, in the absence of British conquest the bourgeois forces would have been generated within the womb of Indian feudalism, the class-struggle would have been fought out as in Europe. If not that we would have gone through a Chinese experience which would also have been far better than ours. As it is we have a single efficient imperialist militarism in power, superimposing capitalist relations of the market on a peasantry that carries on production under feudal conditions. The result is the absence of the development of the productive forces, a double exploitation of the masses and complete disarming of the people. We deplore British conquest as much as we deplore the desire of some revolutionaries to go back to the pre-British days.

The first period of the conquest of India by the East India Company, was a period of indiscriminate and unlimited loot of wealth. It was not the indirect loot carried on under the cover of commercial relations between a conquered agrarian country and an industrial country. But it was a direct one in such an open manner that the proprietors of the East India Company, when they saw their servants coming loaded with wealth, demanded an increase of their dividends, and the House of Commons rushed in to lay claim to all the territorial possessions of the Company and the gains accruing therefrom in 1773. By 1858 it was clear that the possibilities of such a loot had decreased. The capitalist crises had begun to make its appearance in a regular manner in Europe, the first to experience them being England, calling for more systematic export of goods to foreign markets and their

exploitation then had hitherto been done. We have seen elsewhere how the production of iron and steel jumped in England from 18 million tonnes in 1840-50 to 32.5 million in 1850-60. It may well be remembered that the system of guaranteeing fixed returns on railway capital invested by British companies, and the construction of railways begun during this period, were in a measure the reason of this development of British steel production.

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The revolutions of 1848 were the outcome of the crises of 1840 but England was saved from the intensity of the storm, as India was already serving her as a safety valve. As the bourgeoisie developed and obtained control over the Parliamentary machine and ousted the land owners from the State power, the bourgeois power began to grow more systematic and organised. The vast wealth taken from India had given a stable basis of liquid capital to British industries, but a disturbed state of affairs in India, and unregulated rapacious Company control, wherein the traders were directly administrators both of the political rule and commercial development, was not in accordance with the idea of a bourgeois State, which in outward form appears to be above classes and therefore functions better in the business of deception. The time was ripe economically and politically to constitute India into a State sub-ordinate to the British Imperialist State. The 1857 War only served as a very suitable pretext.

The second use to which India was put was to serve as the eastern base for the British militarism. As yet the British State had not developed fully into a militarist State with a regular standing army and vast armaments. This development took place in Britain later than in the other continental countries. (Reference Exh: P. 898). One of the reasons I think is that much of its work of combating the advance of its rivals was done through the armies raised in India. The imperialist expansion of England, unlike that of other countries, proceeded from its richest colony India, after it had struck its roots there on a sufficiently large scale. The penetration in South Africa, China, Egypt, Persia etc. was done

from the Indian base, on a large scale. The expenditure on such wars till 1857 was 35 crores besides the regular normal military expenditure of 15 crores a year. Mr. Buchanan, a member of the Welby Commission, in his report says: "The military strength of India is the main factor in the strength of our Empire in the East." As an example of the aid that these forces render, he says, "Nearly 6,000 British troops on a complete war-footing were rapidly despatched at a critical moment from India to Natal; others have followed, and Indian regiments now garrison Mauritius, Ceylon, Singapore and other places." (He is referring here to the time of the Boer War.) It is perhaps this factor which hid from the European world that England had a standing army on the Indian soil which led Marx to believe that Britain as such had not developed into a militarism, though Britain had become the biggest colonial power before 1880 while the other continental powers only began after 1880.

When the military dictatorship of the British traders was divorced in outward form from their economic functions, the dictatorship assumed the form of Government established by law in India. The openly violent expropriation of Indian wealth was clothed in the peaceful forms of commercial relations and bourgeois property laws. As the British bourgeoisie did not intend to completely destroy the feudal system, since it was the only class with which it could enter into an alliance of exploitation of the peasantry, the basic property laws whether of Hindu or Mohammadan feudal systems, were left as they were. But the new ideology of the bourgeois property relations and status appeared through the new procedure, the Law of Torts, Civil Procedure and even new values of 'truth'—the bourgeois truth appearing through the Evidence Act, Bourgeois "law" was raised above society, all were equal before law was the new principle substituted for the old feudal principle of rank and status holding their own in all spheres. This subtle form of bourgeois dictatorship, which in the last instance is the arbiter and sanction of the law, serves to partially obliterate the class character of the State. But in India the imperialist nature of the State could not be hidden successfully, due to the national factor, which keeps alive the differences.

The exploitation of India by the British bourgeoisie has been exposed in great detail with voluminous facts and figures by the Indian bourgeoisie and also by many liberal bourgeois intellectuals in England. Especially before the last quarter of the 19th century, when Capitalism had not yet become Imperialism, when peaceful trade and commercial exploitation of markets was predominantly the policy of Capitalism, when heavy industry and export of capital had not become dominant in England, you could see many champions of India in the House of Commons, indignant at the policy of conquest, at the forward policy of the Afghan frontier, men who could spend years in impeaching Hastings, and shouting themselves hoarse over the robbery of the *begums*. At that time very interesting works, exposing the violence and loot as practised by the British, could and did appear. But later on, when Capitalism had become Imperialism living on the incomes derived from export of capital to the colonies, the spring source of liberalism dried up. India became an All-Party or non-Party question—even for the Labour Party. Because every section of the bourgeoisie including the upper strata of Labour became a partner in the profits from the colonies. That is why the best exposures of British writers have appeared mostly before 1900 and some till 1914, but rarely after that. The Indian bourgeoisie awakened after the war. Hence its activity in this matter belongs to the post-war period.

The sum total of results of British rule according to us (as expressed in the Colonial Thesis of the C.I. Exh. P. 90) are: the handicrafts and manufactures were destroyed first by extra economic force and violent destruction and a vast number of artisans were thrown on the land. The character of agriculture was thoroughly changed. The growing of crops was subjected to the needs of the exchange market and the peasant economy was brought within the orbit of capitalist market. The peasant still remained burdened with feudal slavery, while his productive activity became economically subject to the capitalist market. This double burden impoverished him completely. Absence of industry gave him no outlet. Land values and rents rose excessively. Indebtedness of the peasantry increased and the

number of parasites feeding on him grew. (some of these things are also set down in the Resolution on Peasants in the general political resolution of the W.P.P. vide Exh. P 135 and also in some of the articles in the Masses). The low level of productive forces, the poor national income was burdened with an expensive bureaucracy and disproportionate militarism, the resulting discrepancy being filled up by high taxation and public debt. Famines, poverty, illiteracy, disease and high death rate, all leading to pacifism and mysticism from the petty-bourgeois to the peasantry, are the heritage of British rule in India.

**76. Our reasons and policy of national struggle—gains of the British bourgeoisie from India—what loss our independence will cause to them—the basis of some of our resolutions**

Everybody in India and outside agrees with the fact that we are poor and undeveloped, and everybody agrees that we must develop and not remain poor. Even the Government says (vide its Annual Reports to Parliament) that India is poor, that Indians should ultimately get complete political power, and that the British shall have ultimately to relinquish control over this poor ward entrusted to their charge by Providence working through the pious souls of the East India Company and its artillery fire. We Communists also say that it is high time that this excellent guardian policeman should give up our necks to ourselves. So everyone seems to be agreed—and yet it does not happen. Because in the first place it is a thing that does not "happen" but is "brought about". Secondly because the chorus of agreement is false. It is false because the problem as stated looks like a problem to be solved upon an all-class agreement. While in fact it is a problem of class-struggle and national struggle. It is a problem of contradictions embracing the very basis of the structure. The contradictions or the class-struggle is not created as is alleged in the Crown complaint.

The first contradiction is between the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie and those of British Imperialism. The natural ambition of the Indian bourgeoisie is to develop the productive

forces of India, that is building up industries. The desire of the British bourgeoisie is to employ the Indian masses as markets for its goods, prevent industrialisation and the growth of the industrial bourgeoisie. Thus the two ambitions conflict and they certainly are not the creation of Communists. This conflict affects the other classes also. Without industrialisation, the growing petty-bourgeois intellectuals cannot find their living. Without industrialisation the pauperised peasant cannot find a place to sell his labour power. Without the destruction of Imperialism the peasantry cannot be saved from the burden of maintaining a costly foreign bureaucracy. Without industrialisation the working-class cannot grow. All this gives birth to the necessity of a united front against Imperialism, to an intensified national struggle.

British Imperialism has invested in India about 1,000 million pounds, in industries, railways, shipping, mines, banks, Government and Municipal loans. Total British investments outside the united Kingdom are computed to be 4,000 million pounds; India therefore holds one-fourth of the total exported capital of Great Britain. More British capital is invested in India than any other single country. The gain from India to Britain accruing in the form of profits over imports and exports, over investments, currency manipulations, payments of services etc. are said to be roughly 150 million pounds per year. This is only 4 per cent of the total national income of Great Britain. If it is such a small part then why is it that British Imperialism holds so tenaciously to India? The importance of this 150 million pounds drained from India cannot be realised by comparing it to the national income. The question is, who realises this money and how is it employed? It is the income of the uppermost bourgeoisie in England. The incomes of this class being large, their consumption percentage is low. I should take it to be one-third. The question would arise—are all these investments, the sources of its parasitic income necessarily held by the big bourgeoisie? Anyone who knows how high is the modern concentration of capital will not doubt that it is so held. It is essentially so in England. There you do not get that kind of joint stock company

development as in America or Germany, in which the stock is split into millions of small units. So very little stock is held by the small well-to-do petty-bourgeoisie. Secondly England with its small area, the incomplete liquidation of the big land-holders and a very old Capitalism has a very high percentage of the proletarian population and no rich farmer class of any considerable size. It is the farmer class which forms the big strata of petty-bourgeois small holders of foreign stock in other countries. It is not there in England. Whatever small share may have been so long held by the aristocracy of labour and the middle-class of the "offices" has been now thrown off by them or expropriated from them in the last ten years of severe fluctuations and crisis. Hence almost all the holdings are concentrated in the hands of the big bourgeoisie. To consider that two-thirds of their incomes become savings, that is, reinvested to draw more surplus values, is not an exaggeration. Even if the whole sum of national savings of 500 million pounds is distributed over the whole national income (4,000 millions) which means that even the two million unemployed are supposed to have savings, the percentage comes on the average to 12.5. To consider that a bourgeois drawing over 2,000 pounds a year saves two-thirds would not be much wide of the mark. With those who draw hundreds of thousands, the percentage would run still higher. The Liberal Industrial Inquiry says, "that something like three-fourths of the new capital invested in industry is set aside out of profits". So out of the 150 millions from India, the British bourgeoisie can be said to reinvest as its national savings 100 millions. The annual national savings made available for re-investment are 500 millions (Ibid, page 108). Thus the Indian drain contributes 20 per cent to the annual basic capital of the British bourgeoisie. I think this is what Lord Rothermere had in his mind when he said that England would lose 20 per cent of her national income by the loss of India. With the usual method of Capitalism, he described the loss of the bourgeoisie as the loss of the whole nation. India is the most jewel in the British Crown because no other single country contributes such a large bright block of capital to the



British bourgeoisie. The loss of India does not mean only the loss of these 150 million pounds. India is the basis of Britain's eastern militarism and trade. India maintains an efficient military machine for the British bourgeoisie. (That it is so can be seen from the latest speech of Sir Samuel Hoare.) Such extra expenditure after deducting what may be considered the normal for Indian purposes would amount to 25 crores of rupees per year. But more than this is the question of the threat of trouble in England itself, that would be given by the loss of India. The loss means the beginning of the disintegration of the Empire, and the fall of the Empire means the almost complete collapse of world Capitalism. Apart from this ultimate release of vast revolutionary momentum there will be serious complications immediately in the British internal situation. The Indian imports provide work for about a million workers in England. I arrive at this figure in the following manner. The total number of workers in England is 16 million. Commodity production in England is mainly for exports. We find that 70 percent of textile production is exported; of coal 33 per cent of iron and steel 50 per cent. These three are the staple and exporting industries (vide the Report of the Liberal Industrial Commission 1926, pages 334 and 343). In the minor industries also not less than 25 per cent product is exported (L.R.D. Monthly Circular 1926). I therefore consider 50 per cent of the whole productive capacity being engaged in production for exports that is 8 million workers. The Indian share of British exports for 1925 was 86.1 million pounds. This would absorb 900,000 workers for Indian exports. This number does not include the British workers engaged in the sea-borne export trade from India, nor the intellectual proletariat engaged in the Clearing house operations of Indian financial transactions with the whole world, all of which pass through London. I would therefore put generally one million British workers as being provided for by the monopoly of Indian trade which would be wiped out almost entirely by the loss of India. It means the revolutionary pressure of one-sixteenth population on the British bourgeoisie Revolutionary India nationalising all the capital invested here means the expropriation of 117th part of the total effective capital of the British bourgeoisie.

- 77. All classes here tend to gain from independence—question of revolution raised by whom?—the state of British Imperialism—is it democracy or dictatorship?—the apparatus of force—its costs—force matched against whom**

Though all classes in India apparently stand to gain by carrying out the struggle for independence from Imperialism, there is another set of contradictions within India itself, which prevents and all-class front against Imperialism. Indian society like any other society (quite contrary to the statements of the Prosecution) is divided into classes. We have the bourgeoisie living on profits produced by the workers. We have the land-owners living on the rents from the peasantry. The function of these classes is to exploit the working-class and peasantry. The bourgeoisie is opposed to Imperialism so far as it is deprived of the 150 crores of rupees drained of by England annually and prevented from increasing the productive forces in the country and enriching itself more. The big land-owning class grumbles but is not opposed to Imperialism like the bourgeoisie, because it is itself a creation of the British Raj. The former land-owning class being wiped out in the wars, the present land-owning class which was at first merely the tax-gatherers' class, was confirmed in its allotments as land-owners in order to form a solid class supporter of British Imperialism (vide Reference Ex. P. 759). The interests of both these classes conflict with those of the working-class and the peasantry. We have a class-struggle as in every other country. The working-class and peasantry have thus to fight out a class-struggle and a national struggle. For the workers and peasantry the struggle against Imperialism is as much necessary as the struggle against their immediate oppressors, the land-owners and capitalists. They have to carry out both at one and the same time. The Communists stand for revolutionary struggle against Imperialism and Indian Capitalism and feudalism. We do not believe that the Indian bourgeoisie, though it stands to gain by independence, is going to fight for it. Therefore the workers aided by the peasantry and the revolutionary elements of the petty-

bourgeoisie have to carry out the task, because the fear of the social revolution ultimately throws the national bourgeoisie into the arms of Imperialism.

When we present the question of the national struggle as being a part of the revolutionary class-struggle, to be carried out by the working-class and peasantry under the leadership of the working-class as organised in the Communist Party, we are said to be talking prescribed Moscow receipts, having no relation in fact to the needs of the Indian situation. We are said to be importing a class war in a country where there is none and where there is love between all classes. "We are said to be unnecessarily importing the question of revolution when everything seems to be attainable by the conference method." We maintain that the question of revolution is not unnecessarily and artificially raised by us. It is there in actual life in India. The class-struggle exists, it is not created. We have seen from other countries how all the tenets of Marxism and Leninism are derived from and applied to the existing conditions of the social struggle. India is no exception.

No one in India, not even the most moderate nationalist requires to be convinced of the fact that the State in India is a class State of the British bourgeoisie maintained by force. (Even Mahatma Gandhi, the advocate of the conference method, now-a-days admits that the army in India is an army of occupation.) The main function of Government, as is always stated by the bourgeoisie is maintenance of law and order. The maintenance is done by force; it is of law that is existing property relations, the imperialist-capitalist system; of order that is the peaceful conditions guaranteeing a continuity of present relations to facilitate the process of exploitation. What is the cost borne by the masses of this apparatus of force? The whole State being an organ of the dictatorship of one class against another, all the revenues raised by it can be said to be its maintenance cost.

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The revenue raised by the central organ of the imperialist dictatorship was Rs. 127,22,77,920 and by the subordinate

provincial organs Rs. 93,29,54,406. The dictatorship of the modern bourgeoisie undertakes directly some of the economic functions of the bourgeoisie, which have become so wide and so necessary for all classes and at the same time so vitally necessary for the maintenance of the dictatorship that it becomes dangerous to leave them in the hands of the bourgeoisie with its internal competition and contradictions. Such departments are the posts and telegraph, the railways, customs, land revenue, income-tax etc. For example, if the assessment and realisation of income-tax were left to a limited company it may collapse due to the contradictions amongst the bourgeoisie itself. Therefore the bourgeoisie voluntarily surrenders the functions to its own organ, which is not so fluctuating as a limited company but for all purposes subject to their control like their own company. It is not that the bourgeoisie cannot manage these departments. The railway systems of America and England are privately owned. But in times of war, the State, in order to protect the bourgeoisie from itself, is forced to take over their control. The wireless telegraphic system of the British Empire is managed privately by the big combine, the Imperial and International Communications Limited, formed of 12 separate companies with a capital of 30 million pounds. In spite of this the State has to take control in times when ordinary profit-making competitive management becomes dangerous. The British dictatorship in India being every-day threatened with the revolutionary movement and international complications, is increasing its hold on several vital services and undertakes many economic functions which in a normal bourgeois State are left to the bourgeoisie itself. The latest example is its refusal to give to a private company, the firm of the Tatas, the institution of the air-service for internal purposes in India. So from the revenue budgets, if we omit the ordinary capitalist functions discharged by the State and those that are undertaken in order to realise money for the apparatus of force, the State is reduced in its essence to a dictatorship based on force composed of the military, police and bureaucracy. (The judiciary is included in the bureaucracy.) The Central and Provincial

expenditure on its essential apparatus of force in 1927-28 was distributed thus:

Money spent on the machinery of force behind the Dictatorship	1927-1928	
	Central Budget	Provincial Budget
General Administrative Bureaucracy	1,72,17,998	11,17,70,093
Pensioned Bureaucracy	2,79,14,206	3,80,54,880
Military	56,33,94,893	—
Police	68,99,654	11,55,00,135
Prisons	34,96,100	2,32,57,545
Bourgeois Justice	13,90,211	5,68,06,953
Political (Inter-state relations)	1,57,74,479	—
Frontier bribery and Force	2,49,68,001	—
Total	66,10,55,542	34,53,88,706
Total revenues (Central and Provincial)	—	220,52,32,326
Spent on exercise of undiluted violence (Central and Provincial)	—	100,64,44,248

These figures are for a year which was quite normal. In times of popular upheavals the expense on State violence increases. It would seem that one hundred crores for a population of 24 crores and seventy lakhs in British-India is not much. But such a comparison is misleading. The comparison can properly be made only in relation to the effective mass of the population that comes out on the streets for active participation in the political movement, such as demonstrations, raids, breaking of laws, political strikes etc. In British-India the population of both the sexes between the ages of 15 and 50, the period of possible effective action is about 124 millions, a little over half the total. But the whole of this never takes part even in the most intense period of agitation. A large part remains sympathetic and benevolently neutral. The big bourgeoisie and land-owners go on the side of Government. The richer sections of the petty-

bourgeoisie in the towns and villages do not come out on the streets. In 1930 Bombay and Calcutta were the hottest places of Civil Disobedience, raids and street demonstrations. I do not think that at the most intense moment more than one lakh of persons took part even in a demonstration pure and simple or active sympathetic raiding party. That means 1/6th of the active population, taking 6 lakhs of the ages between 15-50 and nearly 1/12th of the total of the city of Bombay. By this we may say that in the whole of India the machinery of violence of the British dictatorship had to contend against the unarmed activity, even taking it to be fraught with the threat of mild violence as in the agrarian areas, of about 20 million persons. The violence of the British dictatorship is maintained at the cost of 100 crores of rupees per year armed with the deadliest mechanism of destruction against the potential unarmed violence of 20 million workers, peasants and youths.

**78. Share of the cost of the machinery of force in the total State expenditure—Dictatorship begins to assume constitutional forms—consolidation of the bourgeoisie—association of the feudal class in its work**

Is the British dictatorship maintained and financed by a contribution of "equal sacrifices for all"? The yearly Government of India publications give very graphically how each rupee of the total Central and Provincial revenue is made up. It shows that 74 per cent of the revenue is made up of:

Customs	22
Railways	.17
Land Revenue	.15
Excise	.09
Salt	.04
Irrigation	.04
Forest	.03
	<hr/>
	.74
	<hr/>

Half of the Customs revenue is from taxation of imports of commodities consumed by the masses. Thus the bureaucracy and machinery of violence is fed by the working-class and peasantry. Out of the total revenues of 220.52 crores we have to omit the revenue amounting to 45.63 crores derived by purely capitalist commercial activities of the State in the matter of railways and irrigation for which separate capital accounts are maintained. There remain then 174.89 crores for maintenance of the functions of the dictatorship. From this a part is allotted to clothe the dictatorship and its fundamental basis of unrestricted violence in diverse deceitful forms, such as the "democratic" institutions, departments of education, religion etc. The remaining 101 crores, i.e. 57.5 per cent is spent on its organs of force and bureaucracy.

The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in its most subtle form becomes a Parliamentary democracy, which serves to create an illusion that the masses are being governed not by a class but by themselves according to their own will as expressed through the ballot-box. In India the British dictatorship had no reason to undertake such a deception because immediately after the violent conquest, the military occupation and forcible imposition of new capitalist relations, the whole country was plunged in a social chaos. It took some time for the new forces to spring up and gather strength. The Civil War in America, 1860-65, produced a cotton famine in England, which made the textile owners look up for cultivating surer fields in their own Empire for cotton. The cotton boom affected India and gave impetus to the cultivation of commercial crops. Under the moving forces of the imperialist capital exported to India, the means of communications linking the internal markets to the seas, the demand for raw materials for factories, created a new bourgeoisie with an international sense of the stock exchange market. The factories gave birth to a new working-class, concentrated in large numbers, selling its Labour power to capital having nothing to lose but chains, disciplined by the machine and soldered into a strong class by the interdependence of its co-operative actions in the productive process. The factory owner and the factory worker were the

inevitable creation of Imperialism. The Indian bourgeoisie arose slowly from 1860 to 1914, and the world war gave it a consciousness of strength. The result of the birth of the Indian bourgeoisie was the birth of the demand to convert the undiluted violent dictatorship into one functioning under the cover of Parliamentary democracy, with less rigour and with the consent of the Indian exploiters. The first demand was one of the rights of criticism of the severity of the dictatorship. The second was for "the association of Indians in the work of administration of the country" i.e. the association of the Indian bourgeoisie in the work carried on by the dictatorship.

The British bureaucracy in India was not that solid disciplined frame which it is today. At first it suffered from individual deviations, a conflict between members of the Viceroy's Executive Councillors or a conflict of Provincial Government members disobeying the Central. Then there was the second group of internal conflicts, that between the bureaucracy in England and the bureaucracy in India, which took the form of the question of Parliament's control over the Indian affairs. Both these conflicts were settled by 1894. When Lord Mayo's Government grumbled about the introduction of the bourgeois legal system without knowing from the Councils of 1861 their opinion, he was told, "the Government established in India is from the nature of the case subordinate to the Imperial Government at home and no Government can be subordinate unless it is within the power of the superior Government to order what is to be done or left undone." (Montagu-Chelmsford Report.) The dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie functions through the Parliament, whose executive organ is the British Cabinet. A mitigation of the complete control of the Parliament means a mitigation of the dictatorship. "If the control they (the British Government) possess were to be in any respect less than complete, the power of Parliament over Indian questions would be necessarily annulled", wrote Disraeli's Government. The last occasion when the Indian bureaucracy tried to direct affairs according to its own sense of the need of the situation was in 1894, when the cotton duties were imposed against the growth of



the Indian textile bourgeoisie (which later on was one of the causes of the 1925 Textile Strike in Bombay and partially that of 1928 about which evidence has been led and to which I shall come later on). When some prominent members of the bureaucracy differed, they were told by Sir Henry Fowler "to place their resignations in the hands of the Viceroy". The supremacy of Parliament over the Government of India and that of the Central Government over Local Governments were thus finally established.

These conflicts and objections about some separate measures being dictated from England were not due to any pious desire to annul the dictatorship. It was due to the fear that a very severe administration of the dictatorship might lead to a revolt like that of 1857. Even after 1857, though there was no bourgeoisie yet born and the landlords were completely bought over, the peasantry, wherever it was being pauperised, had continued to revolt as in the Deccan Riots of 1870. Hence the Indian bureaucracy wanted to institute a new policy. The second reason is that every bureaucracy is bound to overreach its limitations, forgetting, especially when it is in a formative stage, that it rests on the support of the class which has raised it to power to work out and administer in accordance with the interest of that class and not according to its "dictates of conscience".

In spite of this the rise of the bourgeoisie in India, the rush of the European bourgeoisie towards the colonies and partition of the world, the American Civil War, the emancipation of the serfs in Russia compelled from the hands of Czarist dictatorship, were too great events, not to force the British bourgeoisie to think of finding a class in Indian society itself on which to rely for the continuance of its dictatorship. "Above all the terrible events of the mutiny brought home to men's minds the danger arising from the entire exclusion of Indians from association with the legislation of the country," so says the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. Thus it was the revolutionary action of the peasantry (though under the leadership of the reactionary feudal lords) that helped the feudal landlords, its own oppressors, and the growing

bourgeoisie to become associates in the work of the dictatorship. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 and further that of 1892 gave the Indian bourgeoisie a right to tell British Imperialism how badly the dictatorship stood in the way of its development. The Indian bourgeoisie not having any means to tell this more plainly had started the Indian National Congress in 1884. When the working-class in Europe had already produced Marx and the First International, had gone through the experiences of the Commune and was now going to found the Second International, we had no proletariat at all. A group of educated petty-bourgeois were asking for increasing association of Indians in the administration of the dictatorship of Imperialism when the Paris Commune had already given the call to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

**79. Development of the radical bourgeois and petty-bourgeoisie—the influence of 1905—attitude of the Dictatorship—evolving into a constitutional autocracy—difference between our "Democratic Dictatorship" and their "Constitutional Dictatorship"**

The developments after 1892 were far more serious. There were severe famines leading to the expropriation of the peasantry. The petty-bourgeois youths, unable to find much outlet in the very slow growth of the minor industries, took to terrorism. The Continent of Europe was threatened with a severe crisis. The British bourgeoisie itself was in a crisis. The result was the Curzonian regime, the swing of the Indian bourgeoisie to the Left under pressure from the petty-bourgeoisie. The Indian National Congress adopted the resolution for Swaraj. The Boycott Movement arose as a protest against the suppression of the growth of the Indian bourgeoisie. The Montagu Report while referring to this period says that the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 was a contributory factor in the movement. The Russo-Japanese War in 1905 led to the 1905 Russian Revolution.

But Mr. Montagu does not say that *it* had any influence and he is right. There was no proletariat in India sufficiently class

conscious yet to pick up the ideological radiation of the 1905 Revolution of Russia. Only the petty-bourgeoisie had arisen to national consciousness and it naturally picked up the influence of its own class, that is the admiration for the rise of the Japanese bourgeoisie.

What was the attitude of the Imperialist Dictatorship to the rising consciousness of the Indian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ranks? It tried to suppress the revolutionary pressure of the petty-bourgeoisie by repression and to buy over the feudal landlords and the upper bourgeoisie to the support of the dictatorship. When we Communists use the language of the class-struggle of the workers and the class alliance of the bourgeoisie with Imperialism we are said to be talking a language not accepted by responsible sane constitutionalists. But the evidence of the late Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India would show differently. Writing about the idea behind the Morley-Minto Reforms, he says: "The problem which Lord Minto's Government set themselves to solve was how to fuse in one single Government the two elements which they observed in the origin of British power in India. They hoped to blend the principle of autocracy derived from the Moghul emperors and Hindu kings with the principle of constitutionalism derived from the British Crown and Parliament, to create a constitutional autocracy." The Prosecution in this case have several times ridiculed our slogan of "Democratic Dictatorship" (vide the Crown Counsel's Address, page 7). Will they now laugh at this excellent representative of British Imperialism when he is speaking of creating constitutional dictatorship? Perhaps they may, seeing that the writer is dead and no longer a Secretary of State for India. But Mr. Montagu was quite right and frank in using the phrase "constitutional autocracy" and so are we. What is the difference between our "Democratic Dictatorship" and Mr. Montagu's 'Constitutional Autocracy' or 'Dictatorship'? As he says, the British Government in India was composed of two principles. The principle of autocracy, which means the rule of force unrestricted by law, which under a feudal monarchy is open and unmitigated

by any other element, and therefore "derived from Moghul emperors and Hindu kings". The second was the "principle of constitutionalism". It means the "rule of force" appearing as a rule of "law" or "a constitution", which is generally a form of the bourgeois dictatorship, and therefore "derived from the British Crown and Parliament". Under the bourgeois rule the task of administering this deception of the rule of constitution is generally handed over to the petty-bourgeoisie and even sometimes to a section of workers as in England and there the blending is easy. But it is difficult in a colonial country. There the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie are contradictory to those of the national bourgeoisie. The latter is not interested in administering the "unrestricted rule of force by Imperialism" in the guise of a constitution, unless it is surrendered a share, which the imperialist bourgeoisie is unwilling to do. Hence the Morley-Minto problem was to find "a special blending" that is to keep the rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie unrestricted and yet get it administered by a class which will not conflict with bourgeois imperialist interests, and succeed in creating the illusion of a Constitution. Autocracy was to be a reality, and the Constitution a mere "principle." The autocracy of the Indian feudal kings was taken over by the Crown of the British bourgeoisie; now was the time for the "principle" of constitutionalism, the illusion to flow out from that Crown. To whom? To those "derived from the Moghul and the Hindu kings", that is to the feudal Nawabs, talluqdars and land-holders. "Constitutional autocracy" was a dictatorship of the British bourgeoisie administering as a Constitution of the Indian feudal class. It was time for the British king to appear in an Indian prince's dress to allay the revolt. He did it by the Morley-Minto Reforms. Mr. Montagu says: "They anticipated that the aristocratic element in the society and the moderate men, for whom there was no place in Indian politics would range themselves on the side of the Government and oppose any further shifting of the balance of power and any attempt to democratise Indian institutions." (Mr. Montagu's soul may now look with satisfaction on the Round Table Conference.)

This shows the difference between our Democratic Dictatorship and the Constitutional Dictatorship of the Morley-Minto Reforms. Ours is a Democracy for the proletarians and a dictatorship against the aristocratic element in society and the moderate men. Theirs is a Constitution for the feudal and now for the bourgeois class and the dictatorship against the masses. You cannot laugh at our terminology, for thereby you laugh at your own bourgeois dictatorship. Now at least the Prosecution will not argue about a "Government established by law". They are of course at liberty to argue about their "Constitutional Dictatorship". But they cannot say it is democratic, as Mr. Montagu says: "It is to prevent any attempt to democratise."

**80. The formula of August 1917—the hoodwinking inquiry—  
1919 Reforms—wide basis of class alliance**

While trying to veil the rule of force with a Constitution giving the reactionary feudal landlords the opportunity to associate with the work of British Imperialism, the furies of the dictatorship were let loose against the radical wing of the petty-bourgeoisie, the cases of Savarkar and Tilak being the most famous of them. The violence of the Imperialist Dictatorship against the Press, Demonstrations and Assemblies was sanctified as the administration of law by the Press Act (1910). The Seditious Meetings Act (1907 and 1911). The Criminal Law Amendment Act (1913) etc. The radical Press was suppressed and the heavy hand of repression stifled the bourgeois national movement till the war. The constitutional garment of the dictatorship however had given no shelter to the bourgeoisie which was developing. The war boom gave the bourgeoisie a new strength, and even inside the Constitutional Dictatorship of the imperialists and the zamindars they penetrated with a desire to expose it, not for the benefit of the working-class and peasantry, but for their own class. Amongst the non-official element in the Councils, the landholders had nearly 70 per cent of the seats between 1909 and 1916, the rest going to the legal profession and others, that is the

Indian bourgeoisie. By 1917 the land-holders lost much ground "to the commercial interest," and the Indian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois interests began a mighty clamour not for a revolution but for a reformed Constitution. The Imperialist Dictatorship was engaged in a death struggle with another Imperialism. At first it totally denied the right to ask for a "Democratic Constitution" for Home Rule. Next when it found that the times had advanced beyond such Czarist outlook, and that a mass revolution was maturing, the Imperialist Dictatorship offered to the bourgeoisie association in its work. In 1917 when the rumblings of agrarian revolt were being heard, in the words of Mr. Montagu, "A ruling prince (feudalism), a Lieutenant Governor (bureaucracy of the Dictatorship) and an Indian ex-Member of the Council (Indian bourgeoisie) attended the Imperial Conference and shared "in the innermost deliberations of the Government of the Empire," shared "in the innermost conspiracies of the Imperialist Dictatorship. But when the footman's stool, given to the Indian bourgeoisie at this Conference did not satisfy it, (about which there was a lot of row in the papers), the King Emperor was called to aid. The pronouncement of 20th August 1917 was made containing that long-winded formula, "the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government." The formula served its purpose of silencing the Left Wing growth of the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois sections. The leader of the Left, Mr. Tilak, congratulated His Majesty on the pronouncement by the Gangapur telegram and promised "responsive co-operation" with the Imperialist Dictatorship. The formula, like a winding staircase, set the petty-bourgeois Leftists on the "upward" path rising to the tops, where the golden seats of the bureaucracy appeared to lie, but giving them no opportunity to occupy the wide expanse of the wealthy plains around. The formula raised their hopes but did not widen their share in the exploited wealth of the country.

The pronouncement and the Reforms Inquiry was a "war measure" in order to keep something before the people in India till the crisis of war had been tided over. Mr. Montagu puts it quite frankly in his diary in which he says, "I have set the politicians thinking of nothing else but my inquiry". Only he told the truth after his death when it was of no use to us.

The reforms of 1919 widened the basis from which the Imperialist Dictatorship hoped to draw its supporters. So long the land-holders predominated, now the predominance was given to the bourgeoisie, wherever it had grown during the war period. The upper strata of the intelligentsia, income-tax payers, a section of the richer peasant petty-bourgeoisie were enfranchised and given the majority in the Provincial Councils (70 per cent of the total seats). This class formed 2.8 per cent (6,375,000) of the total population of the eight provinces (excluding Burma), in 1921, (227,238,000) vide Simon Commission Report, page 191. In the Central Legislative Assembly the electoral roll is of  $1\frac{1}{8}$  millions, half a per cent in a population of 240 millions. The Simon Commission says. "The adoption of the property qualification as a basis for franchise gave a predominance and sometimes a monopoly in the vote to certain classes of the population". In clear terms, it means, only the bourgeoisie, the land-owning class with a small section of the richer sectors of the petty-bourgeois were enfranchised.

81. **Enfranchisement does not give power to the bourgeoisie over the machinery of force—voted and non-voted budgets—certification by the Viceroy—73 years of progress—Dictatorship the same**

Enfranchisement is not really the indicator of how far the Imperialist Dictatorship is prepared to allow room for the colonial bourgeoisie to develop industrially and to subject the State to its class control, by which alone it can hope to develop. The interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie and those of the colonial bourgeoisie are inherently contradictory. Therefore the Imperialist Dictatorship cannot allow its final authority, its organs of force, of

army, bureaucracy and finance to be delivered into the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie. So under the new and enlarged constitutional form of the Dictatorship, the essence of Dictatorship having remained the same, conflicts broke out between the Indian bourgeoisie and British Dictatorship within the Constitution itself. In the first place the Indian bourgeoisie was not allowed a vote on some of the financial items in the Central and Provincial Budgets. The financial requirement of the supreme organ of force, the army, was beyond its vote. The pay and pensions, the appointments and control of the upper sections of the bureaucracy, the real bureaucracy that administers the Imperialist Dictatorship, were non-votable. The third big item that it could not touch was the income of the British bourgeoisie (the debt charges), from its investments in Government Loans. The smaller organs of force like the Provincial police, jails and justice were made subject to the financial vote of the bourgeoisie. But even here control is nil. If we take the expenditure on the organs of the Dictatorship for the year 1927-28 (see para 77) we find that 31 per cent of it is voted and 69 per cent non-voted. In the second place, even in cases where the vote is allowed, the Provincial or Central Head of the Dictatorship can set aside the vote and certify the requirements of the State. In the first Assembly (1920-23) wherein the largest section of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois class did not take part, the Viceregal dictation of Lord Reading certified the enhancement of the Salt Duty, and the Princes' Protection Act (1922). Even the most loyal land-owning and upper bourgeoisie, which had its interests completely identified with those of Imperialism, had to refuse to pass the Finance Bill of 1923 on the income-tax question. Its opinion was contemptuously thrown aside and the Bill was certified. In the second Assembly (1923-26), in which the bourgeoisie after liquidating the mass revolutionary movement outside, entered "to wreck the Legislature from within", the Government demand for finances was rejected as a protest against the refusal to give responsible Government to the Indian bourgeoisie. The Finance Bill was certified again. In 1925, the bourgeoisie refused to pass the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Bill, directed against the middle-class



revolutionaries of Bengal. The Bill was certified. In the life of the fourth Assembly the whole country was put under the direct open rule of force of Martial Law and Ordinances, and all the cant of the rule of law and Consitution was thrown aside. In the matter of giving the Indian bourgeoisie a share in the 5250 key positions in the All-Indian Central bureaucracy that runs the Dictatorship, the Lee Commission held before the bourgeoisie a hope that its sons would have one half the posts in the Civil Service by 1939 and half in the police by 1949. After nine years of the working of the Constitution and "the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to a progressive realisation of responsible Government", of which the Legislative Assembly was supposed to be the highest expression, the point to which the "self-governing" and "progressive realisation" of the honour and responsibility of the most honourable members of that August body had reached is reflected in a scene which shows the Imperialist Dictatorship in its most vivid colours.

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On 11th April 1929, the President of the Assembly, Mr. V. J. Patel, a fine specimen of the most class-conscious and clever bourgeois, after ruling out the Public Safety Bill (which later on became an Ordinance, vide Exh: P. 2579) said: "I have received the following communication from His Excellency, the Viceroy and Governor General (The message was received standing by the Assembly, except the members of the Congress Party who continued to sit in their places). Will the Hon'ble members kindly stand in their places?" Pandit Motilal Nehru said: "Is it your decision, Sir, that we should stand?" Mr. President: " Courtesy requires that we should stand" (The Assembly then received the message standing). And what was the message and how was it written? "In pursuance of section..... I, Edward Frederick Lindley, Baron Irwin, hereby require the attendance of the Legislative Assembly in the Assembly Chamber at 11 o'clock on Friday, the 12th April 1929" (Assembly proceedings, page 2992 dated 11.4.1929). There are supercilious Rai Bahadurs and Knights who return letters addressed to them, if their titles are not

properly superscribed on the envelope; Hon'ble members frown if they are not called honourable; but their relation to the Dictatorship of Imperialism is that of livery servants. The Dictatorship of the barons of British industry refuses to recognise their honour, insists on the homage of standing even to the scrap of paper that is to be read, the scrap, which "hereby requires"—not requests—their attendance. The Indian bourgeoisie attended at 11 o'clock on 12th April 1929, on Baron Irwin, who tells them, "you have refused to consent voluntarily to the Public Safety Bill, to the deportation and suppression of revolutionaries. But the organs of force, the Army and Finance are in my hands and not yours. Therefore, I promulgate the Public Safety Ordinance I require your attendance to hear this. You can now go and protest if you please". The violent open dictatorship, clothed in the Councils Act of 1861, coloured with the attribute of election conferred on the Indian landowners and big bourgeoisie in 1892 and 1909 and promising to become gradually a responsible Government of the Indian bourgeoisie, remains in essence the same dictatorship after 73 years of "constitutional progress", a rule of force unrestricted by law, of force imposed by the barons of British industry on the Indian working-class and peasantry, on the Indian bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie alike. The Parliament of the British bourgeoisie has issued four constitutions for India and in all the four the essence and organs of the dictatorship are left intact.

## **SECTION 2.—Relation of the Indian Bourgeoisie to the British Dictatorship: paras 82—89**

- 82. Attitude of the bourgeoisie—early Home Rule demand—loyalty to the Empire in the war—boycott of the first Assembly—Swaraj Party and the second Assembly—difference between their entry in the Assembly and that of the Bolsheviks in the Duma—wrecking the Dictatorship by the constitutional vote**

What is the attitude of the Indian bourgeoisie and land-owning classes to this rule of force established by conquest? Its attitude

has varied from time to time, partly influenced by the attitude of Imperialism towards its economic ambitions and partly by the revolutionary pressure from the masses and the petty-bourgeoisie. The Indian bourgeoisie as a force did not exist before the war. Whatever of it there was, was the small hive of merchants engaged in export and import trade closely bound up with the foreign exchange banks and houses. Under the shelter of the war it developed on an appreciable scale possessed of a considerable amount of mobile capital and reserves expropriated from the peasantry and workers by high prices and low wages. Even then it did not develop any revolutionary bias. Its highest demand was Home Rule, and not independence. It spoke of the Irish struggle and threatened to copy it. But at the same in the next breath it promised five million soldiers to defend the Empire and Imperialism, if a promise of Home Rule came forth. The Irish resisted conscription and organised the insurrection and yet our petty-bourgeois heroes had the impudence to give a threat of the Irish example while promising millions of peasants to fight the battle of British Imperialism. You can see this attitude in the most radical leader of the petty-bourgeoisie of the war days. Lokamanya Tilak, in his speech at the Provincial Conference in Belgaum in April 1916, on the "Loyalty Resolution". He says: "In order to strengthen and consolidate the British rule, we have shown our willingness to sacrifice to the utmost our blood and our purse" (page 405, Writings and Speeches, published by Ganesh & Co., 1919 Edition). "We never entertained the idea of severing the British connection." (Ibid page 409). In the weak stage of the bourgeoisie of the time and when the masses had not been drawn into revolutionary movement this was the only policy that could suit the objective forces. The eminence of Tilak does not lie in his ideals, which especially in the latter stages were not at all revolutionary, when it may be remembered that just at the time he was supporting the loyalty resolution, James Conolly was organising the working-class for insurrection against British Imperialism and Lenin was calling upon the working-class to turn the imperialist war into a civil war. The eminence of this leader of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois class, apart from his personal

qualities lay in organising and directing the petty bourgeois movement in the capacity of sacrifice and preventing the compromising upper bourgeoisie from sudden collapse before imperialist diplomacy. There lies the difference between his leadership of the bourgeoisie and that of Gandhi. Under the pressure of the mass movement and the shock of the competition revived by the close of the war, the ruined petty-bourgeois turned more to the Left. The war profits began to decline and the bourgeoisie sympathised with the Non-Co-operation Movement under the leadership of Gandhi. When the constitutional reforms of 1919 were instituted and the Legislative Assembly set up, the mass revolutionary forces were on the rise and the working of the constitutional dictatorship was boycotted by a large section of the petty-bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie was as always split into sections, the big financiers and those whose interests were completely linked with those of Imperialism, entering the Assembly and the more class-conscious and radical section desiring an independent growth, remaining out though not participating in the mass movement. The first Assembly was elected by less than 25 per cent of the voters. Though the official figures showed 25 per cent, ten per cent would be nearer the truth as the Government exercised a considerable amount of force and compulsion in the rural areas on the voters. When the mass revolutionary pressure collapsed on the surrender of Gandhi under the pressure of the bourgeoisie and the landowners, the bourgeoisie which was so long coquetting with the Left abandoned the revolution and entered the Assembly and the Local Councils under the leadership of the Swaraj Party. A section of the petty bourgeoisie representing the interests of those who had not the high property qualifications of the franchise kept on the boycott slogan and organised as the "No-Changers". What did the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sections that entered the Assembly do? Was their entry the same as that of the Bolsheviks in the Czarist Duma after the failure of the 1905 revolution? We have seen the reasons which urged the Bolsheviks to enter the Duma. The revolutionary situation was no longer present. Therefore it was necessary to use the Czarist Duma for reorganising the forces under the cover of legality, and for keeping the antagonism of masses to Czarism alive by

revolutionary propaganda through the Parliament. The Bolsheviks were carrying out revolutionary Parliamentarism and they themselves were a party of the working-class. The Swarajists were not a revolutionary party of the working-class. Therefore their fundamental notions of social progress which were based on the development of Capitalism were not intrinsically opposed to those of the Imperialist Dictatorship, which in other words means that, in relation to the working-class and peasantry, both stood for the continuance of the present property or social relations. Their mutual opposition lay in bourgeois competition which had a revolutionary content only in so far as it desired the displacement of the foreign bourgeoisie from the field of the exploitation of the toilers in India. But it was not the opposition as between two mutually exclusive classes like the working-class and bourgeoisie. The necessary outcome of such a position is that at a certain stage, the Indian bourgeois and British imperialist interest can combine and compromise without each deserting its own class interests. The Swarajists entered the Assembly with the idea of constitutional opposition and not revolutionary Parliamentarism. Their earliest programme when the Swarajists had not yet co-operated with the British Dictatorship stated that they wanted to enter the Legislatures with the policy "of uniform, continuous and constant obstruction, to make Government through the Assembly and Councils impossible, if the Government rejected the National Demand". The conditional clause "if the Government rejected the National Demand" itself is sufficient to show the non-revolutionary and compromising attitude of the Swaraj bourgeoisie to the Assembly. The Government had rejected the National Demand when made by millions of the revolutionary masses. The Dictatorship of Imperialism was not going to concede to the Assembly heroes what they had rejected to the mass pressure. Secondly the policy shows that it has failed or purposely refuses to grasp the essential forms of the dictatorship. The above clause implicitly concedes that Government is carried on through the Assembly and Councils. The Government or the Imperialist Dictatorship is carried on through its machinery of force, the Army, Police, Bureaucracy, Justice, Prisons etc. None of these

were governed in any sense by the Assembly or the Councils. And in the final instance, even if they are, a Parliamentary vote does not displace the dictatorship of a class. The Swarajist policy was not revolutionary Parliamentarism once more because it did not aim at rallying the disorganised forces in the country by propaganda through the Assembly. As a party of the bourgeoisie it adopted all the forms of bourgeois respectability and set on the road to participating in the work of the Assembly, i.e. participating in the deception carried on by the Imperialist Dictatorship.

**83. No-changers and Left Liquidators not comparable and not correct—opposition gives way to co-operation and acceptance of office—by 1926 Indian bourgeoisie participates in the rule of Imperialism completely**

Does this mean that the No-changers were right in sticking to the boycott, saying that they would not participate in the councils of the satanic Government? We do not believe so. Czarism was as much satanic if not more. Yet the Bolsheviks use the Duma not for getting concessions but for organisation. The No-changers in no sense can be compared to the Left Liquidators who stood for continuous boycott of the Duma, because the latter did not advocate the abandonment of revolutionary activity. Their leftist mistake lay in insisting on the liquidation of all legal work. The attitude of the No-changers, while retaining the pseudo-revolutionary attitude to the Assembly, was one of ignominious capitulation, liquidating all forms of political activity.

Even this mild attitude of playing with radical ideas of obstruction and wrecking was soon given up. The National Demand was rejected and while speaking on it Pandit Moti Lal Nehru said: "We Swarajists have come here to offer our co-operation. If the Government will receive this co-operation, they will find that we are their men". (vide reference Ext. P. 908, page 56). When the Budget of 1924-25 came before the Assembly, Pandit Nehru in moving its rejection said: "My present motion has nothing to do with the wrecking or destroying policy of the Non-co-operators; and is in fact a perfectly constitutional and

legitimate means of drawing attention to the grievances of the country." So he had already agreed to abide by the Constitution, that is the deceptive form adopted by the Dictatorship. In 1925, Mr. C.R. Dass carried on negotiations with Lord Lytton, the Governor of Bengal, for the formation of a Ministry, thus trying to lend direct support to the administration of imperialist force against the masses. Acceptance of office under the Constitution has no other meaning. Any Constitution formulated by the British Parliament can only be a Constitution which at its most liberal interpretation is a violent Dictatorship, hidden in constitutional illusions, of the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie predominantly and of the Indian bourgeoisie as its minor partner. These negotiations were cut off by the death of Mr. Dass. In July 1925 Pandit Nehru accepted membership of the Skeen Committee. Soon after Mr. V. J. Patel accepted the Presidentship of the Assembly and declared: "from this moment I cease to be a party man. I belong to all parties. If the Viceroy wants I will attend him ten times a day and my assistance will always be at the disposal of the Government officials." Unfortunately for all his attendance he got his "Speaker's Peerage" in the Delhi Prison in 1930 (as he himself said it). In 1926 in the Provinces sections of the Swarajists broke away and formed the Responsivist Party who stood for accepting office. The first acceptance of office was began in the Central Provinces by Mr. Tambe who joined the Governor's Executive Council and later on became an Acting Governor for a few months. Thus by 1926 representatives of all sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and the upper strata of the petty-bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and rich peasants were found accepting offices and actively aiding, advising and administrating, wherever they were allowed to do so, the violent rule of Imperialism against the Indian working-class and poor peasantry, until it was again forced into opposition by the refusal of the Dictatorship to accommodate the Indian bourgeois in interests within its economic framework.

#### **84. Simon Commission—repression and turn to the Left—revival of boycott fails—the talk of "action" of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C.**

The announcement of the Simon Commission and the refusal to give the Indian bourgeoisie any place in it, coupled with the adverse Currency Legislation and a coolness in the policy of protective tariffs for the Indian bourgeoisie on the part of the British bourgeoisie forced on the bourgeois parties to once again talk of fight and challenges. The Congress again called upon the bourgeoisie to boycott the Legislatures. But the rewards of participation in the work of the Dictatorship were too tempting and valiant bourgeois, out for Independence poured in hundreds of telegrams asking the Congress, which again was getting under the influence of the radical petty-bourgeoisie, to excuse him as the "business was important". The boycott according to the General Secretary of the Congress proved a thorough failure (Annual Report to the Calcutta A.I.C.C. 1928 December, page 54). When the Government continued its attack on the growing revolutionary trend of the movement, the bourgeoisie was forced to arrange a stage play of sacrifice, fight and challenge by the imbecile method of boycott. The Working Committee met on 5th July 1929 and found that it was not powerful enough to fight those vested interests, who profited by the participation in the work of the Imperialist Dictatorship and who would be hit by the boycott. "In view of the importance of the question" it shelved the question to the A.I.C.C. (Bulletin No. 11 of 1929, page 122). The A.I.C.C. met and "in view of the importance of the question" left it to the Lahore Session of the full congress to decide. The source of these hesitations lay in the secret negotiations carried on by the bourgeois leaders with the Government on the question of giving a few crumbs. Membership of the Assembly and Councils provided the best screen for such secret treaties and stage shows. The Congress deliberately and knowingly upheld such secret negotiations while it openly bluffed the people with revolutionary phrases. The servility of the leadership of the Congress to the Constitution of the Imperialist Dictatorship, which we have criticised all along and against which the Prosecution had taken



cudgels on behalf of the Congress at the beginning of this case, can be shown in the scene of the A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay. Secret negotiations had taken place between Pandit Moti Lalji and the Viceroy who had announced the extension of the life of the Assembly. The nature of these negotiations was not known to all. Therefore the President of the Congress, Pandit Moti Lalji, who sat in the Assembly at the mandate of the Congress made a statement in the A.I.C.C. He said: "The announcement made by the Governor General.....is very important and calls for a definite action on the part of the A.I.C.C. There are however certain facts which it is necessary for the A.I.C.C. to know before it can decide upon the action to be taken". After such a grave and brave call for action backed by certain facts, the President told that 'revolutionary' flock before him, "I feel I must not disclose those facts without making a reference to the Governor General". A very grim call for "definite action", and also "certain facts which it is necessary to know in order to decide upon the action". But the facts cannot be disclosed. To whom? To the Congress that put the honourable gentleman in a position of power to know those certain facts. The facts are known to the Imperialist Dictator, who has perhaps already decided what action he should take against the Congress. The Congress is out for complete Independence and "definite action" but it must first have the gracious kind consent from the Dictatorship giving it permission to become brave. What was the resolution of the A.I.C.C. on this? "This Committee having heard the important pronouncement from the President"—(the important pronouncement that the Viceroy had made an important pronouncement, certain facts about which could not be disclosed—"realises the gravity of the situation"—and having realised it the A.I.C.C. took the important and definite action of authorising the Working Committee "to take such action as may be necessary". As regards what? "As regards the action to be taken by the members of the Congress Party in the Assembly and Provincial councils." The A.I.C.C. takes definite action to authorise the Working Committee to take such action as may be necessary regarding the action to be taken by the members. Tremendous revolutionary action! And all based on facts that

cannot be disclosed, without reference to the Viceroy. What men of action and profoundly complete independence?

This is the herd that is going to free the country. The uncompromising policy of Imperialism put an end to all this farce and under the revolutionary pressure of the masses, for which the working-class and peasantry did not make any "reference to the Governor General", the constitutional Dictatorship had to shed its deceptive colours and come out with its full force of violence against the toilers. Thus ended the fourth constitutional bribery of the Indian bourgeoisie. The foundations of the fifth on the bones and blood of the heroic struggle of 1930 are now being laid to meet with what fate?

**85. Indian Bourgeoisie and British Imperialism ask us to follow the constitutional example—what classes sit there?— Legislation according to their interests— Legislative gains of ten years—temporary policy of protection—Royal Commissions and Committees**

The political career of the nationalist bourgeoisie in the Legislative Assembly shows that it had not at all carried out a consistent line of what we call "revolutionary parliamentarism". Its first boycott was forced on it by the mass pressure. As soon as it was withdrawn, it donned all the liveries, wigs and robes of the lackeys of Imperialism in the Assembly with great pride, showing to the world that is to the world bourgeoisie, how soon an adept it can become in the art of parliamentary deception. It not only did not carry out revolutionary parliamentarism as it had boasted it would do, but it actually deserted to the imperialists, accepted offices and became administrator of the Dictatorship.

The Imperialist Dictatorship points to this acceptance, by the nationalist bourgeoisie, of all the good points in the Constitution, its responsive co-operation in the working of it and asks the working-class and peasantry to follow the same road, to agitate for constitutional rights in a constitutional manner, just as the nationalist bourgeoisie did in the period 1923-29. The nationalist bourgeoisie when charged with having deserted to the camp of the enemy, turns round and says, "well, we co-operated when

necessary with the Dictatorship. But it resulted in some good to the whole of India. We have fought for the workers and peasants on the floor of the Councils". The question is, can we with advantage follow the road of the bourgeoisie in the Councils? Does it lead to all-class-good, all-class-welfare or only to the aggrandisement of the class of the exploiters? Does this road profit us, the workers and peasants in any way? We have already seen that the real power of the Dictatorship does not lie in the constitution conferred by it but outside it. The Constitution has conferred no rights on any class that can really invest it with political and economic power. So the recommendation of Imperialism to us to follow the way of the Indian bourgeoisie has no meaning. But what about the claims of bourgeois nationalism? It is known that even though the bourgeoisie has no power to control and to enforce the carrying out of its opinion as expressed in its resolutions in the Councils or the Assembly yet it has a complete majority in the Provincial Councils and the Assembly when allied with the landholders. The Constitution divides the electorate on two bases—one, the communal and caste basis—Hindu, Mohammedan and Sikh etc.—another the social or class basis, landholders, Commerce Chambers etc. Though these bases appear to be different yet essentially they are one and the same; because the whole of the electorate is fundamentally based on high property qualifications, that is, it is composed of the landholders, rich farmers, the bourgeoisie and the upper bourgeoisie. Naturally the social class of the representative, whether elected as a non-Mohammedan or Mohammedan, as a landholder or from the Chamber of Commerce is exactly one and the same—the exploiters' class of landholders and the bourgeoisie. The attempt to show that the representative elected on communal basis has different economic class allegiance from the one elected on definitely economic or social class basis is pure cheating of the workers and peasants who are duped into believing that a Hindu or a Muslim landlord when elected on the communal basis will fight for the economic rights of his co-religionist peasants without looking to his own class interests as such. Therefore for all material concrete everyday life purposes, we

have to divide the representatives in the Councils on their economic class basis, as landlords, businessmen, manufacturers or their agents in the intelligentsia, and study them as such. The big landlords have never boycotted the Constitution at any period even at the time of intense revolutionary wave, when even the big nationalist bourgeoisie left the Assembly. They have ever been willing to aid the Imperialist Dictatorship whether in 1921 or 1930. As for the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, a larger part of it boycotted the Constitution in 1930 than in 1921 and consolidated its class ranks for its class interests within the Constitution since 1923. In the bourgeoisie also there are different interests. The export-import traders have different interests from the manufacturers. The importers of steel will oppose protection to Tatas, others may not. The attitude of different sections of the landlords and the bourgeoisie towards the resolutions and bills coming up before the Legislatures differs according to their economic class interests and not according to their communal or caste origin, except in cases which are purely communal which happens rarely. The Swarajist bourgeoisie which assumes very much of non-class airs and talks of sympathy to the workers and peasants is no exception to this. The competitive struggle of the exploiters amongst themselves, their internal class contradictions, lead to the formation of different parties amongst themselves such as the Swarajists, Independents, Nationalists, Responsivists, Non-Brahmins etc. Their votings and combinations whether in relation to bills and proposals of Government or their own groups are guided purely by the question of class gain.

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Their doings of the last ten years show four things justifying the view-point of Marxism-Leninism.

(1) That the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie in relation to Imperialism are fundamentally contradictory and therefore its problems insoluble constitutionally.

(2) That the Indian bourgeoisie, like any other, suffers from internal class contradictions and is incapable of fighting even for its own class demand.

(3) That the Indian bourgeoisie, like any other, is opposed to the working-class and even the peasantry.

(4) That the landlords are completely allied with Imperialism and are opposed not only to the workers and peasants but even to the industrial bourgeoisie on vital points.

During ten years of working with constitutional dictatorship the bourgeoisie all along tried to secure gains for its own class. In the life of the first Assembly the revolutionary outburst overshadowed everything. But as soon as it was betrayed and finished the bourgeoisie which had remained outside the Councils went in and there began a period of small but important concessions to it from Imperialism. The greatest ambition of the Indian bourgeoisie is to build up a high tariff wall and grow behind it. Imperialism is naturally bound to oppose. But it looked as if the Imperialist Dictatorship had given up this policy, its own class interest and had adopted an attitude of allowing the Indian bourgeoisie to grow. It looked as if Imperialism was about to "decolonise" India and make big concessions to its bourgeoisie. This matter has been subject of great controversy but it has now been definitely shown by historical experience that Imperialism has no such desire (For the controversy vide Exh: P. 2491). The temporary manifestation of concessions was due to several factors, a few of which were:

(1) The fright caused by the serious mass revolutionary upheaval of 1921 and the necessity of attempting to buy off sections of the bourgeoisie by promises and not very vital concessions.

(2) Capture of Indian markets by Continental and Japanese goods and the inability of British Imperialism to stop it by ordinary economic competition.

(3) The necessity of keeping the Indian bourgeoisie quiet when British capital would be engaged in attacking British Labour, which culminated in 1926 and 1927.

(4) The alarming deficit in Budgets necessitating the attempts to fill them up by increasing customs revenue etc. But all this policy of concessions was to be carried out in a very dilatory manner, the most usual method employed being that of

commissions and committees. During the last ten years of the constitutional dictatorship we have had six Royal Commissions costing Rs. 54,04,537 (for complete list with the expenses incurred, see page 508, Legislative Assembly Report dated 6th February, 1929). There was also a big crop of committees, the most important being the Inchcape Committee on Retrenchment, External Capital Committee, Taxation Inquiry Committee, Muddimau Reforms Committee, Skeen Committee and the latest the Banking Enquiry Committee. The Lee Commission promised the petty-bourgeoisie half the posts in the bureaucracy after 20 years of candidature, the Currency Commission refused to give gold currency to the Indian bourgeoisie and put on its head the weight of 18 pence ratio; the Simon Commission declared it unfit for Dominion Status and the Agricultural and Labour Commissions revealed problems that neither Imperialism nor the Indian bourgeoisie can solve. The only concession that produced anything fruitful was the Fiscal Commission out of which arose the Tariff Board (whose recommendations have played such a havoc in the 1928 Textile Strike of Bombay: vide evidence). All other commissions and committees have served to collect some statistical material which can be used with benefit not by the bourgeoisie but by the class-conscious vanguard of the working-class. To Imperialism the long rows of these reports are stretchers on which they aspire to carry declining British Imperialism to a revival. To the Indian bourgeoisie they are so many tombs of the frozen eggs of their future. To the Communists they are chalk lines on which to lay the rail roads of revolutionary strategy, after flashing on them the red searchlight of Marxism.

86. ***The Tariff Board and war policy—steel, chemicals etc.—other big branches of production not in the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie—still their attitude to labour and peasants legislation hostile—success in furthering their class gain through the legislatures very poor—hence transference of the struggle outside the constitution and amongst the people***

The only substantial gain to Indian Capitalism during a decade of inquiries has been the protective tariffs granted to the cotton

industry, wherein the Indian bourgeoisie is the strongest. Only in this field can there be said to be some concession from Imperialism to Indian Capitalism. But in all other vital matters there has been none. The solid edifice of Capitalism is built on the development of the machine industry, the production of the means of production. The index of this development is the production and consumption of iron and steel. In the whole of India there is only one plant of this industry—that of the Tatas. But though it is an iron and steel plant it is not one that produces machinery. Its largest capacity is engaged on the production of steel rails, wagons, building materials etc. 2/3rd of its production is dependent on Government orders. It also exports a part of its big iron output to Japan. On the recommendation of the Tariff Board the Indian Steel Protection Act was passed in the interests of this one single company and the initiative came from the Government side in 1924. The Indian bourgeoisie tells us that this concern is a national industry. Is Imperialism then changing its policy and helping national industry i.e. helping its rival, the Indian bourgeoisie, to grow? No. The protection to iron and steel was given because the Tata Iron and Steel Company is necessary for the military purposes of Imperialism. Both the Government and the nationalist bourgeoisie accept this proposition. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is very proud that his bourgeoisie is able to manufacture rails on which the victorious British Imperialism can be carried to shoot the workers and peasants in Mesopotamia. "Without the rails which the Tata Steel Works supplied the success of the British arms in Mesopotamia would not have been so certain as it was," said the patriotic and the holy Pandit while supporting the Government Bill on protection (Legislative Assembly proceedings, page 2320 dated 27th May, 1924). Only two years before that he was vociferously supporting the Khilafat agitation against the dismemberment of Turkey. Two years after he was boasting that it was the, "national concern" of the Tatas that supplied rails to Imperialism in order to defeat Turkey and then asks, with the holy water of the Ganges in his hands, the masses of

India to perform the *shradha* of the masses of Turkey by paying 1½ crores per year to the Tatas, the Indian bourgeoisie and the Pandit for helping to send the peasants of Turkey to Heaven with the aid of the British bullets. When a member pointed out, at the time of voting the reward to the Tatas, that there were many 'kept' members in the Assembly who had shares in the Tatas, the Pandit asked the members to trust to the sense of honour of those members not to vote protection to their pockets. So the protection to the steel industry was not given to build up the foundations of Indian Capitalism, but to maintain a war plant. The protection approved lately to the chemical industry by the Government of India, on 4th September, 1931, is also a part of the war policy. The Tatas are in a position to supply railway material to carry troops and even to turn out guns. But up till now there has been no basis for the supply of chemicals for war. England is a far off base and likely to be cut off by submarines. The Tariff Board in their report observed: "The case for protection of the chemical industry rests primarily on its supreme national importance. It is a key industry whose products are used in most other countries; it is indispensable for purposes of national defence.....". The Government accepted the recommendation and imposed a duty of 7 annas per hundred weight on magnesium chloride. Who can say that the protection policy is not a part of war preparations on the Asiatic frontier? The third industry which is protected is cotton. The protection granted to textiles is extorted by political and economic struggle in which the workers have played the largest part. Protection is a part of the bribe to the strongest section of the Indian bourgeoisie in order to wean it away from financial support to the political anti-Imperialist movement. It is also partially a deal between the Indian and British bourgeoisie to keep a third party, the Japanese, out. The success of the bribe can be seen from the fact that the Bombay Textile bourgeoisie which is most in need of protection has been the least supporter of the political movement and their representative at the R.T.C. was quite willing to barter away on the question of "safeguards".



The Tariff approved in the matter of sugar, electrical wires, cables ect. play at present a negligible part in the productive forces exploited by the Indian bourgeoisie and therefore in no way hit the imperialist economy in any way. Thus by a policy of mere protests, commissions and inquiry committees the Indian bourgeoisie has been able to secure protection worth the name for the textile industry only that may be said to affect the British bourgeoisie to a certain extent. The other tariffs are either for war equipment or for minor branches. Yet for so small a part from the exploited wealth of the workers and peasants, the Indian bourgeoisie abandons the political struggle outside the present constitution.

As against this the largest fields of exploitation are more or less exclusively controlled or dominated by British capital, and the Indian bourgeoisie has been straining every nerve to get a share in them, not by economic competition for which it is not powerful enough, but by using the extra economic force—Legislation or political power. But the political power, the State, being the Imperialist State, it has been defeated in the attempt and even got the worse of it. In shipping, coal, banking, exchange and jute the Indian bourgeoisie is still a weak minor. A few members of its class have secured entrance as far as the outer gates of these huge British monopolies. In order to force that entrance further they tried to reserve the coastal shipping by the Haji Bill. But they failed. On the contrary they have lost heavily on the exchange ratio, and in this they were betrayed by their own allies, the landholders' representatives. The Steel Protection Bill in 1924 was passed by the Assembly without a division, so solidly they were united on it. But on the Currency Bill, in March 1927, the industrial bourgeoisie was divided and the voting was 63 against 51. The internal class contradictions of exporters and importers of currency speculators etc. left the industrial bourgeoisie in the lurch.

While they were thus pouring millions into their pockets by protection, wherever they could, what attitude did they take towards the working-class and peasantry in legislation affecting them? They put a vehement opposition to the Trade Union Act of 1926, which Government had passed because the working-class had advanced far beyond the stage of tolerating illegalisation of its Trade Union activity. But when Imperialism three years later introduced the Trades Disputes Act in order to keep down the militant direct action of the workers, the Indian bourgeoisie first "agreed to the principle" of the bill and ultimately passed it.

Not one of the members of the Assembly ever brought any private bill to improve the workers' lot. In the local Councils, when Bombay carried the Maternity Benefits Act it was done by the help of the rural land-holding members who had a grudge against the highly proud Bombay bourgeoisie. In the U.P. the Oudh Rent Act was opposed tooth and nail. In Madras, they fought the Malabar Tenancy Bill. Because both gave occupancy rights, though meagre, to the peasants. In Bengal the Swarajists fought the Bengal Tenancy Bill for the same reasons. In the Punjab they would not allow the money-lenders' Bill to go through. It was passed due to the competition between two groups of exploiters, not due to any love for the peasantry. The whole history of legislation would show that all that benefits the workers and peasants was opposed, and if passed it was due to the pressure of the movement outside or by the opposition of the landholders to the industrial bourgeoisie and their mutual rivalries.

The conclusion from the ten years' experience of the Constitutional Dictatorship and the use made of it by the Indian bourgeoisie is this. The British bourgeoisie is not at all willing to allow its Indian competitor to use the political machine, the State, for its class aggrandisement, except in small matters. The Indian bourgeoisie has tried with some success to directly increase its profits of industry and commerce by the aid of the Imperialist State. But the same bourgeoisie refused to allow the workers and peasants the right of political movement in order to further their own economic interest. They are told not to mix politics with economy. The workers' and peasants' earnings are subject to "economic laws" with which politics should not be mixed up. But

when the bourgeoisie and landowners are hit by the same economic laws they want to use the State to protect their class interest. Both the imperialist and the Indian bourgeoisie unite in protecting their economic interests by politics and prove the Marxian proposition that "politics is a concentrated expression of economy". The success of Indian Capitalism, however, was very poor. When the temporary policy of encouragement was abandoned by the British bourgeoisie in 1927, the Indian bourgeoisie transferred its economic struggle from the Assembly floor to the world outside. It wanted to use the revolutionary forces of the workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie against the growing pressure of Imperialism and to wrench some concessions for itself. The organisational expression of the bourgeoisie in the struggle is the Indian National Congress.

**87. The economic struggle even of the bourgeoisie necessarily becomes political—example of the control of the Imperial Bank and Chartered Bank—deposits policy—refusal of further liberalisation of the Dictatorship forces the bourgeoisie into opposition**

The defenders of Imperialism tell the intellectual defenders of Indian Capitalism to learn to stand on their own legs and not to rely so much on Government help. Why should not the Indian capitalists mobilise the resources of India and build industries of their own and compete with the foreign bourgeoisie? Why should they ask for protection from the Dictatorship, when they know that they are not going to get it? Why should they not build their own ships, their own banks on the moneys of their own countrymen and oust the foreign competitors? These are the typical questions put to the middle-class patriots who fight for "Indian" industrial development. In the first place it is a general proposition proved by history that in no country has capitalist economy developed with full force without the bourgeoisie possessing the political power. The State is an indispensable instrument for that class which wants to build its economy, and India is no exception to this rule. Whatever capitalist development has taken place has come about in spite of and against the desire of Imperialism. But a further development is

impossible without the constitutional Dictatorship of Imperialism being converted into a constitutional Dictatorship of Indian Capitalism. For example we can take the field of banking. Industrial development in the present period means long term credits at cheap rates of interest, supposing for a moment that other favourable factors are in existence. Long term credits for Indian industries means a high development of centralised banking facilities under the control of the Indian bourgeoisie. It is also necessary for financing of the trade in such a manner that it operates to the benefit of the Indian industry. Can the Indian bourgeoisie do without political power in this field? Take the Imperial Bank of India. It is constituted by an Act of the Legislative Assembly and is an accredited receiver of Government revenues which it holds as deposits. Thus the State here acts directly as the customer of the bank—a customer whose operations total more than the operations of all other customers. The deposits of the Imperial Bank are one-third of the total deposits of all the joint stock and exchange banks in India. Its total deposits in 1928 were Rs. 79.25 crores. The deposits in the biggest bank of the Indian bourgeoisie, the Central Bank of India, were only Rs. 18.55 crores. Whence did the Imperial Bank get such a large amount? Its public deposits were only Rs. 7.64 crores while as a treasury holder of the Government it carried Rs. 71 30 crores so that when there was a run on the Central Bank it had to take assistance from the Imperial Bank. Who controls the Imperial Bank? The British Imperialist Dictatorship. How does the control affect the Indian bourgeoisie? It is reflected in the following table:

(The Central Banking Inquiry Committee Report, Page 575).

<i>Deposits</i>	<i>Lacs</i>
Non-Indian Current Accounts	564
Non-Indian Fixed Deposits	264
<b>Total</b>	<b>828</b>
 Indian Current Account	 1732
Indian Fixed Account	2149
<b>Total</b>	<b>3881</b>
 <i>Advances</i>	
Non-Indians	1170
Indians	3038

The table shows that while the British bourgeoisie deposits Rs. 828 lacs with the bank, it gets advances of Rs. 1170 lacs—41.4 per cent more than what it deposits. In the case of the Indian bourgeoisie when it deposits Rs. 3881 lacs it is advanced Rs. 3038 lacs—14 per cent less than what it deposits. If we calculate this difference on the fixed deposits, the advances to the British bourgeoisie are 436 per cent of its fixed deposits while those of the Indian bourgeoisie are only 141 per cent. In the evidence given before the Banking Inquiry Committee, it was shown that the bank insures its properties and mortgages with British and other foreign banks, it opens branches in competition with the Indian banks and captures customers by giving loans on lower rates to kill the competing bank and raises them when the competitor is wiped out. Though it has got Indian directors on the Management Board, yet its bureaucratic machinery being controlled by Europeans, the day-to-day custom of the bank operates in favour of British business. The majority of the shares of the bank are held by the British bourgeoisie—284 lacs—as against the Indian capitalists' shares—278 lacs (Report C.B.I. Committee, page 574). No bank of the Indian bourgeoisie can beat the credit of the Imperial Bank with its huge Government balances of over 70 crores. Naturally the only way in which the Indian bourgeoisie can get hold of its power is to get a complete possession of the State. Hence the struggle for the Imperial Bank becomes a political struggle. One more example. The whole of the export-import trade is in the hands of the exchange banks, nearly all of which are foreign. The most powerful of them, the five Anglo-Indian banks, are led by the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China. The bank is not like the other banks. It operates by a Royal Charter, the latest of which was renewed in 1927 for thirty years. "In China the bank has direct representation at the leading trading ports, including Shanghai, Tientsin, Hankow, Canton, while in Hongkong its status is such that it is permitted to issue notes up to 30 million dollars." ("The Statist"—9th November 1929—*International Banking*, Section—page 716.)

This bank has also controlling interest in the P. and O. Banking Corporation which again has the controlling share in the Allahabad Bank. Can a bank which has political voice directly in the Chinese ports and controls the currency of one of them be overthrown in its trade supremacy without the seizure of political power by its competitors—the Indian bourgeoisie? So the economic struggle against the exchange banks becomes a political struggle which is not again localised to the Indian soil alone. The political struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie against them has to be linked up with and becomes a part of the Chinese struggle also. The struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie against Imperialism is now-a-days carried on so very plainly and openly in terms of banks, trade, and currency, that it is needless to show further examples illustrating our principle that its political struggle is essentially an economic struggle and that the latter to be successful cannot be limited to economic competition but has to be waged against the political dictatorship as such.

It has already been shown that the Indian bourgeoisie has failed to gain anything notable by agreeing to work the constitutional machinery of the Dictatorship. We have also seen that, even when the Dictatorship was not giving the Indian bourgeoisie "equal partnership" in the profits of exploitation, the most radical section of it, the Swarajist, never tried to work the same constitution of the Dictatorship in favour of the workers and peasants but rather against them. In all tenancy legislations the feudal landlords and the Swarajist bourgeoisie have opposed liberal existence to the peasantry.

When the Dictatorship refused to liberalise its constitution further in favour of the Indian bourgeoisie in such a manner that it can have "the right to discriminate" against the giant of British finance and give thorough protection to the dwarfish Indian bourgeois finance, the bourgeoisie went to the masses and threatened a revolution against Imperialism.

88. **Does it then lead to the revolution?—the idea of bourgeois independence—Canada and Britain as examples—is separatism a mere sentiment or a material objective necessity?**

In order to give a successful and powerful threat, the bourgeoisie is forced to rouse the working-class and peasantry and to organise them for the threat. It calls upon the peasantry to fight for independence from British Imperialism so that the Indian masses may be freed from poverty and slavery. Is this not a sufficient reason for us to co-operate with the Indian bourgeoisie in an anti-imperialist struggle? If the interests of Indian bourgeoisie are fundamentally opposed as shown above to those of Imperialism and if it has failed to achieve its interests through a constitutional agreement and if as a result of it, it is going to the country for support in a political struggle, is it not sufficient to show that it is the leader of the revolutionary struggle and that the bourgeois struggle is ultimately in the interest of the whole country irrespective of classes? Because after all a development of the Indian bourgeoisie means the development of the productive forces of the whole country. The Communists also desire the development of productive forces. Theirs is also the complaint that British Imperialism does not develop the productive forces of the country. Is it not then clear that the Communists should lead the workers and peasants in the revolutionary struggle, not in opposition to the bourgeoisie but in co-operation with it? Why then should they shout in season and out of season against the Indian bourgeoisie? You may shout simply "Down with Imperialism" but why "Down with Capitalism"? The Prosecution in this case and some of our anti-Communist co-accused also have picked up this argument and have held us before the people as rabid anti-nationalists because we oppose the Congress and its bourgeois leaders.

Is it absolutely necessary that anti-imperialist struggle has to be a struggle for independence—independence in the sense of complete separation from the Empire? The realist spokesmen of the bourgeoisie do not admit that it must be so. The question of independence has to be viewed by the bourgeoisie and by us also

from the point of view of the concrete material development of the country. The sentimental factor has very little place in the final outcome of the struggle. It serves only as an ideological incentive to rouse the forces. What after all is the difference between the status of Great Britain, France and Germany on the one hand and that of Canada, Australia on the other? The former are independent sovereign States and the latter are dominions. What is the difference in their status? Canada is within the Empire but raises a tariff wall against British goods, maintains a Consulate in U.S.A., signs separately all the agreements of the League of Nations, has a navy and an army. When England was in need of men and money in the Greeco-Turkish War, Canada refused to be a party to the war against Turkey when requested by Lloyd George to send men and money to help Greece. As regards capital investments the American share in Canada is greater than that of England. So though not separated, yet is she not independent of the Empire?

D/- 27.11.31

Take Germany. She is an independent sovereign State, but is mortgaged to the Capitalism of the Allied countries and all her economic life is at the mercy of America. Then take even England, "the most independent State". Though a victorious Imperialism, having the largest colonial possession, yet as a result of the economic crisis she has become a colony of America, not theoretically but in practical politics. In order to stabilise her currency and economy England had to change its Labour Party Government and instal the National Government at the bidding of the U.S.A. financiers. An ex-minister of this "most sovereign State" after the fall of the Government declared: "We were told that the country would not have Russian Dictatorship, German Dictatorship or for that matter even the Dictatorship of the British Trade Union Council; but the so-called National Government is apparently prepared to accept the Dictatorship of the American Banks at the cost of the British working-class." The Daily Herald, the organ of Labour Imperialist wrote, "where is the patriotism we may ask, in allowing the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to dictate as a condition for a further credit to the Bank of England.



the policy to be pursued in relation to the unemployment benefit? This is not patriotism but acceptance of the Dictatorship, not even of the British Bank, but of foreign finance. It is a blow to British prestige equalled only in recent history by the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Sterling may recover, the Banks of America and France may rally to the aid of Lombard Street, but more is at stake than the credit of the Banks." (September 1931). More is at stake and that is the sovereignty of British Imperialism. Neither is this sovereign independent State in a position to levy its own tariff without being challenged by another Capitalism just as the Indian bourgeoisie cannot raise a tariff wall without opposition from the British bourgeoisie. When the British industrialists proposed to levy tariffs, the French Government threatened intervention, although in a very polite language because had it not a control in British affairs, because of the help of French banks in the crisis? The imperialist robbers guard each other's thin coating of sovereignty, even when exploiting each other, in order that the revolutionary masses should not be severed from their ideological mooring to the imperialist class State and its all powerful sovereignty. Therefore, as the news says, M. Rollin, the French Minister of Commerce, approached a representative of the Board of Trade and expressed the view of the French Government that an imposition of customs duties for the purpose of remedying the adverse balance of trade would constitute an infringement of the elementary rights of the countries engaged in normal economic relations." (Times of India 19.9.31). Thus the independence of Germany is dependent on France and England and the independence of England and France is dependent on U.S.A. economically and politically, though theoretically all of them are quite separate from each other. The theoretical existence of Canada within the Empire harmonises completely with its political and economic independence from the Empire and a concrete existence within the American Empire. The theoretical independence of Germany, England, Belgium etc. harmonises completely with their concrete and practical subjection to the Dictatorship of American finance. When such is the case the continued insistence on the right to separate or the actual

separation from the Empire is reduced to a mere sentiment when read in terms of the Indian bourgeoisie or the Congress. Because you may separate from the Empire and yet be subject to the British Bank credits, or you may remain within the Empire and yet have the right of tariffs, your own army and navy, your own banks etc., by mutual compromise and adjustment. Therefore the Indian bourgeoisie reduces its anti-imperialist struggle into one for Dominion Status, and the Congress reduces its anti-imperialist struggle for independence to one for "substance of independence". Independence and Dominion Status in terms of the bourgeoisie are equivalent terms, provided the economic substance with its concomitant political super-structure is given in its hands.

The bourgeoisie is thoroughly right in this view. The world-wide development of modern capitalist Imperialism is internationally so interdependent that "absolute separation" and absolute independence of one bourgeoisie from another is not at all possible. Every bourgeois sovereignty in external relations is a limited sovereignty, and in the modern epoch of Imperialism even internal bourgeois sovereignty has become limited. In all practical working, the modern independent bourgeois States are one world State, with an extremely sensitive interdependence. In the pre-imperialist epoch the independent bourgeois State had the independence to develop the productive forces of its own country, to appropriate in a sovereign manner all the exploited surplus values produced by workers and peasants, and the power to resist by force the encroachment of another bourgeoisie. In the imperialist epoch with the system of international investment of capital, irrespective of political boundaries of independent States, the former economic content of absolute independence is lost. So what remains now is the possession of the machinery of force by a bourgeoisie which if independent can use it in order to smash the productive forces of another, if they are getting stronger, or to resist the others' attack, if its own development, its own appropriation of the producers' wealth, is becoming a danger to another. Thus the bourgeois struggle for independence becomes in the modern imperialist epoch a struggle to obtain freedom to

develop a strong machinery of force on the basis of which to create or preserve its international share of the wealth expropriated from the workers and peasants. Absolute and complete economic financial independence is an impossibility for any bourgeois State, because in all essence its whole fabric is a part of world finance. Hence the demand of the bourgeoisie and the Congress is "for equal partnership," "for substance," meaning thereby a satisfactory share in the exploitation. It is not insisting on complete independence, it does not just now feel the necessity for independence to build its machinery of force because it has nothing to preserve or increase as its share of the international loot. It is quite prepared to leave the external relations and the army to the imperialist partner, and for the present take the limited economic substance. Thus the bourgeois demand for independence is bound to become one for Dominion Status when it comes to actualities.

**89. The nature of workers' and peasants' independence as found in our programmes—can we not postpone the class-struggle for a time till we have overthrown Imperialism?—there is no room for bourgeois development like that of England or Japan for our bourgeoisie—hence the class-struggle is forced to the front**

But such is not the case with the demand of the revolutionary parties of the working-class and peasantry (Exh: P. 135.) They have no interest in the financial partnership with the international bourgeoisie, because the one is exploited by the other. There cannot be a partnership between the exploited and the exploiters. The revolutionary struggle of the working-class and peasantry necessarily means stopping the loot of the imperialist bourgeoisie from India, expulsion of its bureaucracy and overthrow of its militarism. The working-class has no profits to share by participation in world finance, hence its separation is real and revolutionary. Our demand for independence amounts to negation of all exploitation and therefore does not degenerate into one for

**Dominion Status.** Our struggle therefore necessarily includes a struggle for Soviet Democracy. Soviet Democracy is incompatible with bourgeois democracy. Hence separation is the natural resultant.

The attainment of Dominion Status by the bourgeoisie in the present epoch of the decline of Capitalism is an impossibility. Dominion Status means giving to the colonial bourgeoisie a share in the profits and freedom to develop. Can a losing concern allow its trade to go into the hands of a subordinate for the simple demand of it? Dominion Status to the Indian bourgeoisie will lose British Imperialism 1/5th of its national savings and will give birth to a possible competitor, adding to its already existing difficulties. British Imperialism is not in that rich position now when it could allow Canada, Australia, U.S.A. to develop independently and kick at the mother country.

This uncompromising attitude of British forces the Indian bourgeoisie to assume revolutionary airs, to threaten mass action and talk of independence in order to increase "its bargaining power." It does not take to revolutionary action even for its class gains, like that of U.S.A. in the 18th century, for two reasons. It is economically weak and is itself closely interlinked with British concerns. Secondly even to obtain Dominion Status, if it is compelled to organise the revolutionary forces, it is afraid to do it because in the present epoch of proletarian revolutions, whenever the bourgeoisie for its class gains puts the workers and peasants on to revolutionary action, it is turned into a class-struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and Imperialism together. It happened like that in China, in Java etc. So the Indian bourgeoisie is afraid to go to the masses and enlist their revolutionary support as did the American bourgeoisie against England.

We have already seen that the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie are contradictory to those of Imperialism, that the uncompromising attitude of Imperialism forces the bourgeoisie into opposition, but for fear of the workers' and peasants' revolutionary class-struggle and its own economic weakness, it cannot support revolutionary action. Even if the bourgeoisie is not really fighting for independence but is only showing some

opposition, still for the sake of united front, why should we not restrain the workers and peasants from pursuing an immediate class-struggle? [Exh: P. 1373(19).] Let us first do away with Imperialism, then in our own home we may fight our own internal feuds, if there are to be any. Even strategically for the Communists it is better to have one enemy at a time. Grow first like Japan, the great Asiatic power. Then if Capitalism does fail, if our especial Indian culture does not succeed in evolving a better society, we may think of becoming like Soviet Russia. Why not postpone the class-struggle for the time being? Let the Congress and Communists, Mahatmaites and Marxists unite against the satanic Government is the advice of the nationalist petty-bourgeoisie to us. And the Public Prosecutor in this case made it something of a grievance that we did not accept this advice.

This call of the bourgeoisie for all-class unity makes a powerful appeal to the masses and some sections of the petty-bourgeoisie. The working-class and peasantry being still under petty-bourgeois illusions listen to this all-class unity appeal very seriously. When the revolutionary Communists have exposed the hollowness of the plea they have been shouted down by the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The bourgeois argument is very simple and therefore more dangerous, requiring an exposure showing how the world conditions of capitalist economy leave no room for the development of Capitalism, for that type of revolutionary growth of the bourgeoisie which built England, Germany, U.S.A. and Japan. The present conditions of world economy inevitably force the class-struggle to be conducted jointly with the anti-imperialist national struggle. The present conditions of world proletarian movement govern the forms of our two-fold struggle. The programme of the Communists in India is evolved out of the compelling forces of world economy and the place of the Indian inside. The programme of the C.P.I. is the only programme that can lead the Indian masses out of the present blind alley of Capitalism. The programme of the Indian bourgeoisie has to surrender to ours because it cannot solve the Indian problem at all.

**SECTION 3.—The Economic Basis of the Agrarian  
Class-struggle in India: Paras 90-100.**

**90. The bourgeois programme regarding removal of the poverty of the masses—the main points of the problem—the drain of wealth—high land revenue—debts—absence of rural banking—adverse currency (Some of our viewpoint on this in P. 135)**

The capitalist economy of India is a part of world economy and is influenced by it. The programme of the Communists receives its shape mainly from the conditions of Indian capitalist economy and is influenced by world conditions to the extent that the operations of Capitalism and hence of the class-struggle are international (which would further explain the question of international relations of the proletarian parties). There would have been no reason for us to congratulate the Chinese Revolution (Exh: P. 1381) or condemn the Sacco-Venzetti Case (Exh: P. 2311) had it not been that the Capitalism of both the countries affects our struggle.

We cannot think of India as an isolated chamber. The Indian National Congress and the bourgeoisie are not absolutely blind to this fact. But they are incapable of assessing its full import and hence even from the point of view of the bourgeois struggle commit mistakes. We shall therefore see how our programme supersedes that of the Indian bourgeoisie (which will explain incidentally our resolutions before the A.I.C.C. which have been put into exhibit) and is vindicated by the actual needs of the situation and its development.

The Indian bourgeoisie posing as the leader of the peasantry moans over the appalling problem of their poverty and proposes to fight for them and remove their poverty. The Communist Party also fights for the peasantry in order to free it from poverty. There is not a single writer of the bourgeoisie in India who does not say that is the most urgent problem of the Indian situation. The agents and intellectual representatives of the British Imperialist Dictatorship also admit it, even though they try to underestimate it a great deal. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report in 1918 said: "it

is evident that the curve of wealth descends very steeply and that enormous masses of the population have little to spare for more than the necessities of life" (page 87). Twelve years later the Simon Report said the same thing: "The ordinary cultivator on his tiny plot is still a man of few resources, with small means for meeting his limited needs" (page 19). So all are very anxious to remove the poverty of the teeming millions. The Dictatorship has no specific programme for them. But the Indian bourgeoisie has one on which it bases all its propaganda, to capture the peasant masses for its own class gain. The premises for the programme of the Indian bourgeoisie which are "always put before the peasantry (and against which we put our own) are: (1) the foreigners drain 195 crores of rupees from India, making "us all" poor to that extent; (2) the foreign Government takes a very high land revenue and ruins the peasantry; (3) the land revenue and other burdens of taxation throw the peasantry into debts; (4) government does not assist rural banking and therefore the peasant cannot get capital to increase the productivity of his land; and (5) government reduces peasant's return of his price of crop by adverse dislocations of currency. This affects not only the peasantry but the whole country. These points you can find in the bourgeois nationalist literature in India. The peculiarity of these points is that they nowhere mention what is the relation of the bourgeoisie and the landlords to the peasants' economy. The whole issue of the peasant poverty is shifted on to the shoulders of the British Dictatorship and the question of classes inside the country is hushed up. However, we take the bourgeoisie at its own words and give the intellectual petty-bourgeoisie the credit of revolutionary honesty and suppose for a moment that it does succeed with the aid of the peasantry in the anti-imperialist struggle. To what extent is the problem of peasant poverty solved thereby? The bourgeoisie is everywhere the same in its class role. All the capitalist countries have got "their own rule," that is of their bourgeoisie. Does that "their own rule" solve the problem of peasantry there? It does not. The same indebtedness, the same starvation is found there also.

The drain of 195 crores of rupees is composed of several items and goes out of India in several ways. Will the expulsion of Imperialism alone return these 195 crores to the peasantry, the workers or even the petty-bourgeois middle-class? The British bourgeoisie draws this wealth by means of trade, interest on loans, pensions of its bureaucracy sent to India, currency manipulations etc. The installation of the Indian bourgeoisie in power will only mean a diversion of trade into the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie. Trade as such, export or import, does not stop. The sale of British goods to the peasantry will be substituted by the sale of goods of the Indian bourgeoisie. Thus the bulk of the 195 crores will be still accumulated and drained. Only the pool will be held by the Indian bourgeoisie instead of the British. Cotton will be bought from the peasants in the same way as it is today. Only the profits of discounting its bills on the foreign export market will be taken by the Indian exchange banks instead of the foreign. The Indian bourgeoisie describes this process as "retention of the wealth inside the country". It may be retained inside the country. There is much food locked inside the earth also. The main question is does it reside inside the vast masses of the peasantry? It does not by any means. The stoppage of the drain reduces the "poverty" of the Indian bourgeoisie only and not of the masses.

The nationalist bourgeoisie bids for the support of the peasantry on the slogan of the reduction of land revenue. The total land revenue demand of the British Dictatorship to finance its machinery of force and its other activities is about 35 crores for the last ten years (35.68 crores in 1927-28.) This is 16 per cent of the total taxation. The sum appears to be staggering but not so the percentage. In fact the total percentage of land revenue to total taxation has been falling for some years, when in those very years the nationalist bourgeoisie was clamouring against excessive land revenue rates. In the recent years the struggle of the Bardoli peasants is the ideal epic of the peasantry by singing which the bourgeoisie wants to hold the leadership of the masses. But the problem of land revenue is not a problem of its ratio to the total taxation of the country. Mahatma Gandhi may demand reduction



of the land revenue by half as a sign of Swaraj. But such a reduction not only by half but even by three-fourths is not going to benefit much the vast masses of the peasantry nor is it going to reduce its debt problem. Its excessive rigour is not its absolute amount but its relation to other factors. Land revenue cannot be considered apart from the question of the whole peasant problem. It is indispensibly related to (a) the capitalist exchange market and money rent; (b) the fragmentation and low size of holdings; (c) the rental demands and tenures; (d) indebtedness; and (e) the general crisis of Capitalism. It is for these reasons that in our programme we do not solely insist on the reduction of land revenue (vide the W.P.P. Manifesto on Bardoli). Our demand in relation to the peasantry has to be taken up as a whole. Our programme has been brought several times before the Indian National Congress but it has been all along rejected by it. That our programme is now attacked by the Prosecution in this case and is held before the country as one that will ruin the peasantry rather than improve its condition.

**91. The state of the Punjab peasantry as an example—what does increased productivity lead to?—economic holdings will only displace two million peasants in the Punjab—where to find place for them?**

As an illustration of our programme we may take the state of the Punjab peasantry our efforts at the Lyallpur Conference. The reason for taking the Punjab as a first illustration is that it is adored as an ideal land of peasant proprietors. It grows high priced crops. It enjoys a good climate and a fertile soil. The land revenue is paid direct to the Government, unlike the U.P. where it is paid to the zamindars. The whole land is watered by rivers and canals. It grows good wheat and cotton and it is praised by both Imperialism and the national bourgeoisie because its people are daring and migrate to other lands, join the army and relieve the pressure of population on land. In such conditions we ought to have found the peasantry free from debts, owning tolerably good holdings without fragmentation and people covered with gold. But actually we find that (1) 83 per cent of the proprietors are in

debt. The debt of the tenants is heavier. (2) The total agricultural debt of the province is 135 crores or 33 times the annual land revenue (Page, 56 Report of the Central Banking Inquiry Committee). (3) Annual interest charges amount to over 34 crores or nearly 8 times the total land revenue of the province. When the intellectual representatives of the bourgeoisie discuss the causes and the remedies of indebtedness, they agree almost on all points with the British bourgeoisie and the Government. Both the Indian and British bourgeoisie blame the peasantry for extravagance in marriage and death ceremonies. Both blame them for litigation. Both curse them for not seeing the advantages of co-operatives. Both want to whip them into increased effort and productivity. The peasant's pseudo-liberators tell the world that he sits idle for six months. All pray to heaven that he may be liberated from debt and while praying they carry in their pockets the peasant's mortgage deeds, and almost every street paper contains unstinted abuse of the money-lenders. We view the result of these remedies as follows. You want increased production. Supposing it is obtained where will you sell it? Our bourgeoisie is sorry for the low productivity per acre in India and wants scientific cultivation to be increased. The yield of wheat per acre in India as compared with the wheat producing countries in the other parts of the world shows the following results:

*MAUNDS PER ACRE*

India	
U.P. Irrigated	12.2
U.P. Unirrigated	8.2
U.S.A.	10.7
France	13.0
Canada	13.2
Germany	17.5
Great Britain	22.5

(Figures as given in the paper read by the Director of Agriculture in U.P., Mr. George Clarke, at the Indian Science Congress held at Allahabad in January 1930.) The figure of 8.2 is the yield per acre of unirrigated land in the U.P. The irrigated

yield is 12.2. In 1927-28, the area under irrigation was 12 per cent of the total crop area (vide "India" 1928, page 111). If we take the above two figures as normal yields over the whole country, the average production comes to 8.68 maunds per cent. Supposing our bourgeoisie and landlords succeed in raising the production—which of course they cannot—to the British point, to 22.5 maunds per acre and also the other countries were to join in the race, we shall get the total world production of 292.2 million tons, while the present approximate world production is 130 million tons (1930). We have seen for the last two years that under the present property relations of capitalist society even these 130 million tons could not find buyers. Millions of bushels are lying in the fields in Canada because the price does not cover even the cost of moving the crops from the field. In Ottawa they burn wheat in the locomotives instead of coal. If capitalist relations are to remain the same how can production be increased to 292 million tons? The whole bourgeois world is issuing mandates to curtail production and not to increase it. The bourgeoisie argues that if increased production cannot be disposed of do not do it, but that each peasant should increase the productivity per head. In other words it means rationalisation of agriculture by reducing the number of cultivators per acre. What does it mean in the case of the Punjab? There are 29 million acres under cultivation with 4,031,000 cultivators. The average holding is thus 7.2 acres. It requires 15 acres to keep one plough and a pair of bullocks engaged without waste of energy either of the peasant or his instruments. So in order to give minimum living to the four million cultivators either two millions will have to be expelled from the Punjab or the cultivated area will have to be doubled. Under the present capitalist relations neither is possible, because there is no industrialisation to absorb the two millions, nor is there another 29 million acres that can be cultivated. If intense cultivation on the present acreage is to be practised in order to raise productivity—granting that by competition and tariff walls our bourgeoisie will find the markets—the new capital requirements in the form of manure, improved seed and tools will be so huge that no bank in India can undertake the task.

For example the present plough of Rs. 7-8-0 to be converted into a better one, say the Meston plough, will cost Rs. 15/-, that is a new total capital of Rs. 16.87 crores for the Punjab alone will be required. In Chhach where they have intense cultivation it requires from Rs. 100 to 270/- per acre for manure. Leaving aside such high specialisation, if Rs. 10/- per acre are allowed ordinarily we shall require 29 crores for manure capital. How can a peasantry with a debt of 135 crores raise 46 crores more, when the whole world bourgeoisie is not releasing its monopoly of wealth and the people have nothing to buy with?

**92. Money-lenders—rural banking is money-lending—our fundamental problem—who swallows the surplus?**

The propaganda of the Indian bourgeoisie against money-lenders is inspired from motives of profits rather than of sympathy for the peasantry. Its cure for the money-lenders is rural banking. What is rural banking if not money-lending? You may say the money-lender charges high interest, as much as 150 per cent per year, while the banks charge 12½ per cent. That the money-lender is a ruthless oppressor. Is the banking bourgeoisie less ruthless? The money-lender is his own bailiff while the polished bourgeois bank uses the bailiff of law. There is very little difference between the bank and the money-lender, so far as the peasant is concerned.

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The demand of rural banking is the demand of the city bourgeoisie to oust the money-lender and instal itself as the receivers of rent. The demand of rural banking is the demand of the Indian bourgeoisie to control the export of commodities at their source, to establish a monopoly of buying. It is a demand to reduce the price it has to pay for its raw material by operating upon the crops through its loan banks. It is a competition between the rural money-lending bourgeois who pockets a large part of the peasant's surplus and the city bourgeois who wants a share of it. It is only an attempt to transfer the indebtedness of the peasant from one section of the bourgeoisie to another. In their competition, the peasant for a time may gain a small reduction of interest, but

when the deal between two bourgeois sections is complete, the peasant will be thrown into the clutches of capitalist farming and the monopoly buyer even worse than today. Rural banking is the forerunner of the Wheat Pools on the Canadian model, that control the fate of the workers' price of bread and when the markets fall, squeeze the farmers out and tell them to stop cultivation, at the point of Martial Law if necessary. (The Central Banking Inquiry Committee has actually suggested the Canadian model for adoption in India, in paragraph 281.) Money-lending or banking in agriculture is only a form of investment of capital in agriculture and the expropriation of the peasant surplus value production by the bourgeoisie does not cease, whether it is carried on by a Limited Company of money-lenders, who never see the peasant, or by a single money-lender who always hangs around him. The difference in the tortures inflicted by both is the difference between the death by the butcher's knife whose hand is visibly near and the death by the bullet whose shotsman hides in the polished chambers of a stone building.

The conversion of the indebtedness of the peasantry standing at present at high rates of interest into one held by banks at low rates does not solve the fundamental problem of rural poverty (and therefore does not find mention in our programme). The fundamental problem is who steals the surplus of the peasant labour and how it is done. Only on the solution of this depends the solution of the agrarian problem. The expropriation of the peasant surplus is a problem of class-struggle. In the vast rural masses of India a terrific class-struggle is raging, the same class-struggle which the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and all agrarian revolutions of the world have expressed in direct forms. We, Communists, do not create the class-struggle in the peasantry. It is not imported from Moscow in a suit case nor conjured out of the works of Lenin. The class-struggle is there, embedded in the capitalist system under which the peasantry in India is starving. The Punjab is said to be the most prosperous land, "the ideal land of peasant proprietors," and our agrarian programme (which was going to be put forth through the Lyallpur Conference of which I was first elected the President) is one that arises directly from the demands of the peasantry even of this ideal land and is the only solution of the agrarian problem.

### 93. Stratification of the peasantry—concentration of land in the hand of the rich owners—where is the lost purchasing power locked?—an example under Batai cultivation in Lyallpur

In the Punjab we have come to a stage of very well marked stratification of the peasant proprietors. The concentration of land in the hands of big proprietors is proceeding fast, and the rate of exploitation of the poor section is so high that the stable class of middle peasantry is being gradually ruined. The percentage of small owners with barely a strip to cultivate can be compared with those who possess more of the land though they are few in number. It will reveal the growth of the parasitic class of land owners developing in a province where land can be purchased and sold more freely than in the neighbouring province.

No. of owners	Percentage	Acre holding	% of the total land
6,25,400	17.9	Less than 1 acre	1
14,28,000	40.4	1 to 5	11
9,19,000	26.2	5 to 15	26.6
4,34,000	15.5	Above 15	61.3

The most intense class-struggle is visible in these figures. Every peasant proprietor must have at least 15 acres of land to keep him alive the year round in times of normal prices. But 3/5th of them have not got more than 5 acres each, while a tiny section—15.5 per cent—has more than enough and owns 61.3 per cent of the land. Do not those 28 lakhs of small proprietors desire to possess that huge tract of 18 million acres held by a few rich proprietors? They do. They hunger for land, free of burden, to cultivate and to live on. Those upper rich are also ready to give land to the hungry peasants but for a price—a price which "allows" starvation to the toiler in order to create riches for the rentier. Even then not all the parasites will give land. From the group of 1,68,000 owners owning between 25 and 50 acres, they refuse to give 609,000 acres for cultivation. From the group of 121,000 owners of over 50 acres who hold over 74 lakhs of acres they refuse the tenant 52 lakhs for cultivation. Is not then this parasitic class the cause of over-population on fragments of

holdings, forcing ten lakhs of cultivators to starve with less than 1 acre per head? The nationalist bourgeois reformer praises the hard-working peasant on the small strip of land. "Eating barley that they may sell their wheat grinding the seeds of their melons to mix with their flour and giving the rind to cattle that nothing may be wasted, the Mehtons of Hoshiarpur Jullundur are a remarkable example of what can be achieved even upon the smallest holding by industry and thrift." Writes Mr. Darling and the imperialists and the bourgeoisie applaud him. In Alipur 3 per cent of the owners own half the tahsil leaving about 2 acres each for the remaining 97 per cent. The class-struggle thus regains in all fury compelling the 97 per cent to seize the land of the 3 per cent. It does not require a Communist to tell them much about it.

It is one of the planks in the nationalist creed to idealise the poverty of the poor peasants and hold them back from the "satanic lures of the city." But as usual nationalism here also becomes a bundle of contradictions. If the peasant has a piece of land which cannot feed him well or keep him engaged, nationalism tells him to have supplementary cotton industry or a second string to his bow. This propaganda only serves to keep a large reserve of landless labour in the rural areas, to cheapen the wage rates for the benefit of the richer landlords. Then comes a second school which wants him to migrate, to be enterprising in order that he may earn wages outside and send his money to the village so that the land revenue may be paid, the money-lender satisfied and the danger of class-struggle reduced. But Capitalism refuses to absorb the increasing number of the pauperised peasantry. Imperialism, landlords and the rich rural bourgeois refuse to let him have better wages in the city, and thus, jammed between the two, the poor peasant oscillates between the town and country ever starving and waiting for a happier day. That day is when he overthrows the rich landlordism, tears up his mortgage deeds and papers and frees himself from the dictatorship. To this end he is driven by Imperialism and Capitalism.

They say everything will be well with everyone only if the purchasing power of the masses were to return to them or to increase. The bourgeois moans over columns of newspapers about the vanished purchasing power, as if he does not know where it has vanished. But Marxism locates the thief that steals it.

It is the feudal capitalist and imperialist system of property relations that exists in India and in the world, that puts the purchasing power in the pockets of the robbers. This robbery is done skilfully under Capitalism, because it takes place under the cover of the money form of exchange. But in agriculture under the semi-capitalist feudal conditions it is vividly clear where the peasant purchasing power goes. The visible proof of it is found in the *batai* system of land tenure. A study of this system shows that even if he has a very economic holding, the tenant cultivator starves and is worse off than the labourer on the capitalist farm. (In our programme we ask for the abolition of this system.) The Economic Board of Inquiry, Punjab, under the patronage of the Government maintains certain farm accounts of various system of tenure. Most of the farms are situated in the fertile Lyallpur colony area where splitting up of the holdings into small pieces is prohibited. It is a district which has the highest average of cultivators holding above 25 acres. From the accounts published by the Board for 1926-27 we may take out four estates (three from Lyallpur and one from Montgomery district) of acres 28, 228, 796 and 50 on which the crops did not fail and were more or less normal. All these were rented out on the *batai* system. The distribution to tenants was as follows:

Estate No.

1 of	28	acres	given	to	1	tenant	giving	him	28	acres	for	cultivation
2 of	228	"	"	"	18	"	"	each	12.66	"	"	"
3 of	796	"	"	"	40	"	"	"	20	"	"	"
4 of	50	"	"	"	5	"	"	"	10	"	"	"

Thus every tenant had an economic holding to work upon. There is one peculiarity about No. 3. It is that 500 acres of it were prepared for tractor cultivation and preliminary ploughing was done with a tractor. The minute details about these farms can be found in the publication. The board refuses to draw any conclusions as it is afraid of landing itself into the class-struggle and perhaps becoming an "accused organisation" in the Meerut Case. The results worked out from the accounts show that the actual application of peasant labour produced per acre Rs 50/-, 40/-, 59/- and 38/- respectively. How was this produce shared under the *batai* system?



### Estates

	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%
Net income per acre	Rs. 50	100	40	100	59	100	38	100
Of which the								
Landlords took	.. 33	66	25	62 5	39	66	26	66
Tenant's share.....	.. 17	34	14	37 5	20	34	12	34

In every case the landlord has taken nearly double the share of the tenant. But the real import of this can be grasped still further by the total incomes. The total net production was Rs.59,527. Out of this 4 landlords seized Rs 39,430 and 64 tenants were left with Rs. 20,097 for the whole year's work. The landlord took Rs. 9,857 per head and the peasant Rs. 314. When 64 peasants were producing values per day they were producing for each of the parasites Rs. 27/6/- per day and for themselves only 14 annas a head. Still more you have to consider the fact that the tenant had to find money for expenses of seed, revenue, water charges, etc. for which he may have had to pay interest to the money-lender. The major part of the expenses are shared by the tenant and the percentages of earnings of both on expenses alone, apart from the fact that the tenant has contributed his productive labour will show why money so feverishly rushes for investment in land.

Expenses per acre by the							Percentage return on expenses of the	
	Landlord			Tenant			Landlord	Tenant
Rs	9	1	0	24	11	8	364	68
"	10	2	2	20	13	11	250	71
"	8	4	1	28	0	10	487	71
"	6	12	5	17	8	10	371	87

This shows why every petty-bourgeois with a few farthings tries to invest in land and not in industries or banks. The demand for land by the poor peasantry finding no outlet in industries and the high rate of exploitation of the labour if the tenant raises the price of the land continually. The intense exploitation shows above attracts the money-lender to invest his money and the city bourgeoisie yearns for rural banking in order to have a share in the loot.

The bourgeoisie sheds tears over the vanished purchasing power and says that the masses are poor, and the reason it gives is that we are ground down by Imperialism. But that is only one cause according to us. A simple overthrow of Imperialism will not add to the 14 As. of the cultivator in the above example. Along with it the parasite landlord capitalist must vanish. A change in the social structure in the above example would mean raising of the 14 As. of the toilers purchasing power to Rs. 2-10. The purchasing power will thus return.

**94. How landowners were imported in the colony to form a bulwark for Imperialism—cause of peasant indebtedness—break-up of village communes into individual holdings—money rent**

The fallacy of the statement that prohibiting fragmentation of holdings (about which an attempt was made in Bombay by a Government bill: vide W.P.P. activities) and keeping the new colony areas in big blocks of land will produce a happy class of peasant proprietors, is proved by the fate of the Lyallpur Colony. The Imperialist Dictatorship in India sometimes appears as the champion of the peasantry and claims credit for the irrigation and colonisation of the wastelands in the Punjab. But unfortunately the Dictatorship produces men who reveal its secrets. The nationalist bourgeoisie of the Congress also thanks the Dictatorship for irrigation or colonisation projects and is prepared to acknowledge the irrigation loans of a Dictatorship as a debt that can be justifiably borne by the working-class and peasantry in India. For were they not raised to benefit agriculture? But a member of the Dictatorship himself says the following about the opening of the canal colonies:

"It was thought that a moderate infusion of the capitalist element would strengthen the colony not only by providing natural leaders for the new society but also bringing in men of superior intelligence and wider outlook than the ordinary peasants." *What happened to these natural leaders of superior intelligence? "They bring their lands much more slowly under cultivation, they quarrel with their sub-tenants. They dispute*

endlessly amongst themselves . . . In the Lyallpur Colony of today few of the larger grantees reside on and some never even visit their estates" (Darling's "Punjab Peasant"). The real purpose of the Dictatorship was not to bring land into better cultivation. It was to create a class, which, after bribery, would support it against the rising class-struggle and the ambition of the city bourgeoisie to get rid of the Dictatorship. "Where, too, in the Punjab, society is still semi-feudal in character, there were obvious advantages in propitiating the landed gentry with valuable grants of land; and the hope was cherished that "it would do something to restore the influence of a class which has been seriously impaired by the rise to power of a prosperous and educated middle-class in the towns." (Ibid, page 137). Thus the irrigation schemes and vast debts to foster colonisation were actuated by a desire to stabilise a feudal landlord class as a support of the Dictatorship of Imperialism against the attempts at democratisation by the rising bourgeoisie. So here again as in the sphere of constitutionalisation of the Dictatorship by Mr. Montagu, Imperialism was raising a class to fight another class—a class war of reaction against progressive development. If in the colony areas now we see a class war, it is a correction of the former retrograde process. However, the hope of Imperialism is not yet completely smashed. In the struggle of 1930 when the city petty-bourgeoisie and the workers and peasants threatened Imperialism, the Punjab landed gentry "propitiated with valuable grants of land" resolved to stand by the Dictatorship and against the Congress and the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Imperialist Dictatorship, threatened with a serious situation by the rapid expropriation of the peasantry, pretended to save the peasants by the Punjab Land Alienation and other acts. But capitalist economy is superior to such aberrations of its own legal structure. The law only changed the label of the peasant exploiters from non-agriculturist to agriculturist money-lenders. The terrific rate of exploitation is creating rapidly a class of rentieres, who call themselves peasants. The area under tenancy is increasing. The ideal small proprietor is now the ideal toiling slave of one million parasites according to 1921 census, who, 10 years ago in 1911 were 626,000.

Our attitude to this question including that of the money-lenders (as expressed in our platform and literature) differs radically from the bourgeois-Congress view, or even the viewpoint of the so-called Punjab Socialist Party. It has been thoroughly demonstrated that the incidents of mortgage debts and peasant indebtedness began after 1860. Mortgages which in the early seventies had averaged only 15,000 a year, 20 years later (1888-93) averaged 20,000 and in 10 years the annual increase in the area under mortgage rose from 1,65,000 acres (1875-78) to 3,85,000 (1884-88). Sir James Lyall, the then Lieutenant Governor wrote: "Under the influence of indebtedness and our present law and Civil Code procedure, transfers of land were proceeding in all districts in an increasing ratio and in many with dangerous rapidity". The number of bankers and money-lenders including their dependents increased from 52,263 in 1868 to 1,93,890 in 1911. These facts are known to every bourgeois economist in India but being bourgeois they cannot understand its significance. The official spokesmen of Imperialism who have humanitarian feelings consider that the peasant was a stupid fellow who was either extravagant or indolent and therefore got into the hands of the money-lenders. Some of them say that the peace and security of British rule have enhanced his credit and prosperity. Those who are prosperous borrow because they have credit. The poor borrow because they are poor. The profound conclusion of such writers is that the reason why the two men became blind was because they lost their eyes! One lost it because he had an eye to lose and the other because he had already lost it. Our petty-bourgeoisie content themselves by simply pointing out to the British rule.

The real cause is to be sought in the advent of the Dictatorship no doubt. But the real nature of it lies not in the fact that it is foreign, British or White but because it is a capitalist Dictatorship. Secondly, even if the British Dictatorship had not come, the Indian bourgeoisie would have been forced to do exactly what the British bourgeoisie did.

We have seen what the Czarist Minister Stolypin did after the Revolution of 1905 in Russia. He permitted the peasants in

agricultural communes to separate themselves with their share of land, with the right to sell or purchase. The result was the growth of a rural bourgeoisie that became the supporter of Czarism and a pauperised peasantry that went as workers to the towns. Was there any question of foreign rule there? None. Every capitalist economy has done it in every country. The British Dictatorship did it here also. Mr. Thornburn, who has studied the Punjab peasant economy well, noticed this feature but failed to understand its proper significance and after mentioning it degenerated into a sermoniser over extravagance, credit etc. "In 1849-50 we converted collective into individual ownership of land plus the right to alienate it at pleasure. By so doing we made an unconditional gift of a valuable estate to every peasant proprietor in the Punjab and raised his credit from the former limit of the surplus of an occasional good crop to the market value of the proprietary right-conferred. In one day the old order passed away and gave place to a new one, which imposed upon the yet unsophisticated Punjabi a responsibility to which he was unequal. To his delight and surprise he found that his former petty borrowing powers were now practically unlimited, his *bania* being ready to accommodate him to any extent." Divested of the sophisticated nonsense about responsibility, surprise, etc. what does the above proposition mean? It means that at first the collective agriculture was broken into one of individual private property holders. A process of class differentiation was started. But it is impossible to accentuate it without money economy, money rents. The fixity and security of British taxation is often compared in glowing terms to the ruthless complete expropriation by the former Sikh rulers. But this fixity brings the peasants into the clutches of the capitalist market because the revenue and rental charge has been made a fixed charge in money on the peasants' production. Without the money rent, the right of alienation would not have led to rapid expropriation of the peasantry. Indebtedness, increasing mortgages and pauperisation of the poor peasants were born out of the introduction of capitalist economy into agriculture, which happened under the British rule, but there is nothing "British" about it. The British Dictatorship

did in the Punjab in 1849-50, what the Czar did in 1861 partially and in 1905 more thoroughly. The Prosecution, who charge us with copying Russian methods for the solution of the peasant problem, would do well to note that they have been allies of the Russian hangman Stolypin long before we thought of becoming their executors to save the peasantry.

**95. Effect of money economy as we read it—crops brought under the rule of the capitalist exchange market—the demand for reduction of land revenue and its meaning**

What did the introduction of capitalist economy mean? It meant the break-up of the stagnant economy of the feudal day, it had progressive element inside it. Germs for such an introduction had ripened within the economy of the commune villages. A growth of a rich peasantry as against the poorer one had been slowly developing, though by periodical redistributions, the peaks used to be lopped off. The British rule simply broke-up the shell of what had already ripened. The rich peasant was allowed to separate from the commune and its obligations, which many a time meant the payment of the share of taxes of the poorer one by the rich member. The opportunity to separate was "a delight and surprise" to the richer strata and not to the poorer. The separation and allotment of landholdings took place according as they existed at the particular period, and even the poorer sections liked to hold land separately and break off hoping to see better days. With the break-up of the communal agriculture, the men with little reserve borrowed to invest capital in instruments, cattle etc. and the competitive struggle began. This by itself would have not meant much but for the introduction of money rent. The obligation to procure ready money to pay rent to the Government is a compulsion to bring crops on the exchange market. Submission of crops to the exchange market means enticement of village economy into the fluctuations and expropriations of the capitalist market and the consequent expropriation of the poor peasants who are unsophisticated so far in the knowledge of capitalist finance. The result is that in order to provide for cash money, the banker, money-lender is sought after, who between

him and the market wipes off the whole of the peasant's surplus, compels him to sell out and become worker in the towns or a field worker. Concentration of land, and growth of landed proprietors begin.

This is an inevitable process under Capitalism and not a specific feature of the British Dictatorship. Every Capitalism has to find a market for its goods in the peasantry. Ten richer peasants are better buyers than 50 pauper peasants in a commune (though one big landlord is not a better buyer on the whole than ten richer peasants).

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Hence class differentiation has to be accelerated. Secondly, the growth of the richer peasantry means sending out the poorer to the factories. Thirdly, it means a better growth of commercial crops for the industries. All this is inevitably necessary for Capitalism. It is necessary in order to develop the productive forces in capitalist society up to a stage.

The specific evil of the British Dictatorship is that it broke the old shell but did not provide the new one. On the contrary, it reimposed a bit of the old broken piece on the new forces. It did not allow the Indian industries to develop to absorb the ruined peasant or the artisan. While breaking the commune and introducing money economy it imposed the feudal landlords who held up capitalist competition in agriculture and thereby prevented the growth of the bourgeoisie. The specific destructive feature of British Imperialism lies in this. It generated all the human ranks for the growth of industry and Capitalism, but suppressed the material forces for it.

The petty-bourgeois parties in India, not understanding the economy of Capitalism, adopt a reactionary utopian outlook towards this question. Their analysis of causes being wrong, their remedies are wrong. They think the peasant goes into debt over his marriages and pleasures. So they organise social reform circles and harangue about thrift, self-control and all the ancient fables about it. Not knowing the compulsion of capitalist economy they preach fantastic schemes of self-sufficing village

units. In normal times they preach increased productivity. When confronted with a glutted market, they tumble into schemes of curtailment of production. They are sorry for the loss of purchasing power of the peasant and when shown vividly how it is pocketed by the parasitic landlord and rich peasant money-lender, they remember the rights of private property in land and the "due returns" of Capitalism. For even a slightly more purchasing power, the poor peasant must be allowed to retain a portion of his produce on which alone he can become a customer for goods. To allow him to retain it means extinction of rent, i.e. landlordism, extinction of his debts and interest thereon. It leads to a revolutionary class-struggle which may ultimately engulf the bourgeoisie also. So they abandon the class-struggle against landlordism and money-lenders and ultimately end in vapoury schemes of village reconstruction and demand for reduction of land revenue only. How do we view the struggle for the reduction of land revenue? Reduction of land revenue by half is said to be one of the ingredients of Purna Swaraj. Landlords, rich peasants, poor peasants, big industrialists and small bourgeoisie all demand it. The Communists also demand it. In each case the demand has a different class significance. In each period of agricultural development it carries a different economic significance. What does our demand mean in relation to that of others?

**96. The land revenue in India—its two systems—what does our support to the demand for reduction of land revenue mean?**

The land revenue in India is a part of the surplus values produced by the peasant toiler and seized by the Imperialist Dictatorship for its maintenance. The operations undertaken to carry out the seizure assume many varied forms, whose sum total comprises all the systems of land tenure and land revenue codes. The Dictatorship in some historical stage of the needs of its consolidation and development required allies. So it allowed a class of powerful brigands, who were for the time in possession of land and were pocketing the whole of the surplus values of the peasant to retain a certain percentage for themselves in return for



their uninterrupted support to the Dictatorship against all attempts to overthrow or nullify it. Such agreements were principally of two types. One in which the Dictatorship in a period when it had not yet the highly developed machine of bureaucracy or the complete bourgeois class sense, scenting the undeveloped productive forces, agreed only to take a fixed sum for all time to come and left the possessing brigands to do with the peasantry as they liked. That became the Permanent Settlement Zamindari. Another type was that in which the Dictatorship and the possessing brigands agreed upon a certain proportion to be shared by each from the receipts of the seizure of values produced by the peasant. The Dictatorship reserved to itself the right of varying the amount of such total seizure but the shares of allocation of it between itself and its supporting class remained more or less fixed. That became the Temporary Zamindari system. Under the first type falls 18 per cent of the total area and under the second 30 per cent. There is a third type of seizure and it is called the ryotwari. In this the principle at the beginning was that the Dictatorship would seize directly from the cultivator a part of his produce through its paid servants and would admit of no intermediary. These classifications are conventional, and in the present stage of the development of the productive forces, of the class-struggle and the national-struggle they have lost their original content and form, as regards the relationship between the Imperialist State and the cultivator. Our bourgeois professors stick to these classifications because in the first place they are continued into the text-books of the educational system; secondly, because it provides a good attractive ideological form for the class-struggle between bourgeois economy and feudal relations which hinder its development. At the time that these classifications came into existence, these forms of seizure had real meaning. The British Dictatorship did not employ its bureaucracy to regulate the amount or forms of seizure of the peasant produce by those whom it recognises as zamindars. It was only concerned with what it received. In the permanently settled tenures it had no reason to inquire at all what happened to the actual toiler. In the temporarily settled, it only exercised a little

supervision to see that it received a proper share. In the ryotwari it had to deal with separate, small or comparatively big holding peasants who were directly brought into contact with the bureaucracy of the Dictatorship, in matters of the seizure of their produce. But as time passed by, this had to change. The zamindars, backed by the Dictatorship and its machinery of force, seized all they could from the cultivators, leaving them very little for their own feeding. The result was revolts, fall in production, and consequently an adverse effect on the British bourgeois profits. The Dictatorship had to intervene and guarantee the cultivator a greater part of the produce for his needs so that he may produce more. In many cases the zamindars squandered everything and the Dictatorship undertook to manage their possessions by Courts of Wards. In the case of temporarily settled zamindari, as it prevails in Agra and Oudh, where the Dictatorship takes 45 per cent and the zamindar 55 per cent of the total seizure of peasant produce, it was impossible to ascertain the 45 per cent without knowing the full hundred per cent. Thus today under all the three systems of land revenue the Dictatorship directly assists the seizure of the peasant produce. For example, under the zamindari, if the zamindar's men fail to secure rents from the cultivator, the Dictatorship at once appears on the scene with its course issuing decrees, attachments, warrants etc. and its Police force executing them. Under the ryotwari, if the sub-tenant holding the land from the actual tenant (or *khatedar*), who has rented it from Government, fails and refuses the same process is carried out. It is also not true to say that under ryotwari there is no intermediary between the Dictatorship and the cultivator. Where, and as happens in most cases, the cultivator rents land from original *khatedars*, he is liable to the man from whom he rents the land. The only difference is that under zamindari of the type in U.P. and Bengal the cultivator in every case has to deal with the zamindar and the Government. While in ryotwari there is a percentage of cultivators who are not yet ruined and made sub-tenants. They can deal directly with the Government. In zamindari in every case the Dictatorship has to share the loot with its ally, while in ryotwari it is not universal. But since in ryotwari

also the extremely small holding and the pauperisation of peasantry leads the peasants to become sub-tenants and to concentration of land in the hands of rich farmers, money-lenders or bankers, we get everywhere in India a system which is more or less a zamindari system. The three systems may be said to have resolved into two—permanently settled or temporarily settled zamindaris. The classification made by Government from the point of view of sharers in the expropriation of the cultivator thus becomes faulty. The Punjab is put under temporary zamindari. But there are small cultivators as are found in the ryotwari directly paying rent to the State, while in ryotwari there are millions of acres sublet by the owners thus making the system what is generally understood as zamindari. In fact if we take the loose sense of the term zamindari—that is a system of cultivation in which the cultivator carries on cultivation with his own instruments, and is compelled to pay rent to one or more super-tenants or owners, who share it with the State—then probably 80 per cent of the cultivators live under zamindari, under the direct subjection of landlords, *khatedars*, *khots* etc. Thus we can say that 8 out of every 10 cultivators are directly expropriated by a social parasitic class, apart from the fact that the State and the whole capitalist system rest over their head.

Viewed in this manner the struggle for reduction of land revenue is purely a reformist struggle, which ultimately promises no emancipation for the peasantry. When any one, whether under ryotwari or zamindari, asks for a remission of revenue or rent, what does he ask for? That the Dictatorship should reduce its share of the seizure of the peasant's produce. Since most of the cultivators' rental goes through an intermediary the benefit of the reduction of the revenue does not reach him for a long time while enhancement affects him at once. Secondly, the expropriation of his surplus through rent does not vanish at all. The enhancement of land revenue becomes a serious danger only in cases where by deliberate policy the small cultivators' minimum subsistence also is cut into by settlement officers proposing fanciful rates by looking to the high prices of certain products, as happened in Bardoli. The struggle against enhanced land revenue when

carried on by a small peasant is a struggle for guarding his minimum subsistence. The same struggle carried on by wealthy estate owners becomes a struggle for maintenance of their profits from rent. When we support such a general struggle, we in fact support the former, not the latter. Moreover, we never support the struggle against land revenue as such. But it is always allied with other fundamental demands (vide the W.P.P. Manifesto on Bardoli in 1928). To take a concrete example from the Bardoli struggle, which we supported whole-heartedly and about which evidence has been led in this case. There the Bombay Government increased the land revenue demand by 22 per cent on the previous settlement and the people refused to pay it. This refusal had a different meaning for different classes. For example, take three cases out of the several mentioned by the Government Inquiry Committee (page 19) whose report was accepted and approved by the Congress. A piece of (page 19) land (1) 9 acres and 21 gunthas assessed at Rs. 45-7 was rented to the cultivator at Rs. 217-8-0 (2) 10 acres and 38 gunthas assessed at Rs. 33-14 was rented to the cultivator at Rs. 248. The enhancement of 22 per cent means increase in the assessment by Rs. 10/-. But now the peasant would not have to surrender only Rs. 10/- more of his produce. The rentier landholder will not give up the ratio of his rent to that of the assessment so he will insist on taking Rs. 266-8, an enhancement of Rs. 49. In the second case while the share of the Dictatorship will increase by Rs. 7-8 the monopolist holder of the land will claim Rs. 54-8 more. So who will fight in the struggle against revenue enhancement more determinedly—the monopolist who lets out the land or the tenant cultivator? Of course the latter. When the big landholders were compromising in the Councils over the question, it was the cultivators and tenants who starved themselves, suffered losses, disease and death at the hands of Police violence. At the landholders encouraged them from a distance and sent them a few pies for relief because the success in the struggle meant a successful continuance of the expropriation of Rs. 217 and 248 by the rentier landlord in the above instances. The one struggles for "existence", for the protection of his starvation wages, the other applauds him for his

own "parasitic existence." When we advocate a platform of peasant struggle, we fight against the expropriation not only by the Dictatorship but also by the monopolist rentier.

**97. The class-struggle inside the anti-Imperialist struggle in Bardoli—the Dublas and Dharalas—what it means in U.P. and Bengal?—Rents and the feudal class—Indian bourgeois interest opposed to feudalism**

In that mighty struggle of Bardoli, there was also another chapter which was hidden from the eyes of the masses. There are thousands of landless workers who are literally slaves of the peasant families, not only rich but sometimes of the ordinary type also. They are called Dublas. The Dubla is a slave who can be sold from one master to another. He has no separate independent existence, he is not a human being. He is entered in the cost of production along with manure and bullocks. In the accounts of the farmer, depreciation is charged on him as they charge it on the plough or a tool. The Congress advocates before the Government Inquiry Committee, vehemently pressed for determining the cost and depreciation of a Dubla. The committee tried it and said: "It is a difficult matter to reduce that uncertain quantity, the Dubla, to rupees and annas." In the evidence laid before the committee by the Congress, rich farmers would come one after another and declare that their agriculture was in loss because "the Dubla had disappeared." The Dubla, like the bullock, when under oppression, desires for freedom and simply runs away. When he does this, he is hunted out from village to village and all the farmers join in the chase and even the Imperialist machine aids in it. In order to take away from this hunt the obliquity that is attached to the idea of "slave hunting" in the modern bourgeois times and in order to fool the world, every master puts a certain cash debt on the Dubla's head, labels him as an indebted person flying from his creditors, and thus satisfies bourgeois conscience and culture, which gets eloquently indignant over slavery (have they not been taught to hate slavery in the text-book "Uncle Tom's cabin"! ) but aids in a hunt for the Dubla because his slavery is clothed in bourgeois terms of cash obligations. What interest has the Dubla

to fight against the enhancement of land revenue? Nothing at all. With reduced profits his fodder is reduced, but out of increased profits he will not get a single blade more. Yet in the whole campaign of the Bardoli struggle no one except us spoke for the liberation of the Dubla slaves. Yet the Indian bourgeoisie is not ashamed to clap its delegates when they thunder against slavery in the League of Nations. It is quite possible that individual farmers may be very kind to their Dublas, may even treat them as members of their own family. But such kindness cannot take the place of emancipation. Thus within the anti-Imperialist struggle for reduction of land revenue, there is a class-struggle for the liberation of the Dublas. There is also a class-struggle of the Kaliparaj villages against their landlords. When we support the Bardoli struggle we not only support the one against the enhanced land revenue but also the class-struggle. The poor peasant of Bardoli who has a small holding and in some places also owns a Dubla toils as heavily as his Dubla on his field. He is incited against us by the bourgeois rich farmer who tells him that we do not support his struggle against high land revenue but want to incite a fight between him and his Dubla. This is a piece of misrepresentation. We certainly do not tolerate the expropriation of the peasant's produce not only by the Dictatorship but by others also. At the same time we point out that the robbery of the small peasant by his rich lessee from whom he rents land is just as much to be overthrown as the exploitation of the labour of the Dubla by the peasant owners small or big. Unless the toiling peasant recognises that this is so, he will not succeed against the Dictatorship. Unless the claims of the landless workers and even of the so-called criminal tribes like the Dharalas are recognised, so long as they do not get the promise of land and freedom, they will not aid the small and middle peasants in their struggle against their expropriation by Imperialism.

The struggle against land revenue, i.e. the share of the Dictatorship in the peasants surplus become a genuinely anti-Imperialist struggle, in the case of the actual tenant or owner cultivators. But that same struggle when carried on under the feudal zamindaris like those of U.P. and other places, by the very

nature of the system under which the Imperialist Dictatorship and its allied class expropriate, the peasantry assumes a double role. It seeks to overthrow both landlordism and Imperialism, because there the one is inseparable from the other. The estates of Agra and Oudh are vast plantations cultivated by peasants in small plots, working under semi-slavery conditions. Slavery is a thousands times better than the life of the U.P. peasant, because a slave has at least to be fed by his master till he has sold him. But here you are free peasants and nothing is yours. The whole province of Oudh is a vast colony of "free slaves" who are killed, beaten, dishonoured by the handful of owners of the 260 estates. The Imperialist Dictatorship supports this class of brigands, now called "Barons of Oudh," because, 'as the Simon Commission observes, "the most powerful of the talluqdars own hundreds of villages and enjoy very large incomes. Their wealth, their social status and the control they exercise over their tenants, give these 'Barons of Oudh' a position of very great influence in their areas." (Page 64). Their wealth arises from the robbery of the peasants, their social status from the class rule of Capitalism and feudalism and their control from the bayonets of the Dictatorship. A purely reformist struggle against land revenue in this area at once develops into a class-struggle. Because here the Dictatorship is directly the force that guarantees the feudal rights of the zamindars and is a cosharer with them. It guarantees to the feudal landlords the strength of its machinery of force, with whose aid the barons expropriate the peasantry of all its produce. This brings us to one characteristic of the zamindari system as it prevails in the U.P. and Bengal, and the other general type which we have already defined. The tenant in the ryotwari areas of Bombay or the petty zamindari areas of the Punjab leases land from a bigger landholder who receives a certain amount of rent, a fixed part of which he delivers to the State as land revenue. Here the tenant enters into a more or less bourgeois type of transaction unencumbered by any other personal obligation of custom or usage. But in the zamindari areas under feudal conditions a tenant is burdened with feudal obligations which though nominally declared illegal, continue to exist (vide Sir Malcolm Hailey's

speech in the U.P. Council). The cultivator is directly ruled by the zamindar, to whose servants and agents he has to pay for easy terms of tenure, big *nazranas*, birthday gifts and free service whenever required. Until 1921 the peasantry was being wholly expropriated by the feudal barons. After the risings of 1921 the Dictatorship, awakened to the danger of revolutionary extermination of the zamindars by the ruined peasants, curbed the feudal brigands and granted some fixity of tenure to the peasants. But it proved absolutely futile in the real working, as the Governor of U.P. himself admits. The feudal landlords being not in a position to buy off the whole bureaucracy were in a position to nullify the Oudh Rent Act and such other enactments. Neither was the Dictatorship in a position to displease this powerful class, which is a great counter-revolutionary bulwark against the masses. So in this part the Dictatorship of the modern bourgeoisie which historically overthrew feudalism in its own country is the direct supporter of it. The result is that the peasant in this area has to meet the demand of rent as much as in the other areas, but in addition, is forced to put his labour power and implements at the disposal of the zamindar for which he gets no return. His expropriation is, therefore, more distressing. Not being given the help of even that semblance of law which the Dictatorship is forced to lay down for its own unlawful existence, the peasant under these feudal zamindars is deprived of his produce, his clothes, his cottage, his wife, his children, is robbed, beaten and killed at the sweet will of the zamindar. In the permanently settled tracts the expropriation of the peasantry by land revenue demand is negligible. When we compare the shares of the Imperialist State under the three prominent parts, we find the incidence of land revenue realisation per cultivated acre to be:

	Rs.	
Under ryotwari	2-10-4	(on 63.9 million acres)
„ zamindari Temporary	1-15-4	„ 64.9 „ „
„ „ Permanent	0-15-4	„ 48.6 „ „

(The total million acres compared form 64% of the cultivated area.)

(Worked out from "Statistical Abstract of Government of India," 1930 edition, page 358-59.)



On the face of it this looks as if, in the system where the Dictatorship expropriates the peasant directly, the peasant is heavily oppressed, while under the zamindari expropriation per acre is so small. But the fact is quite the reverse. If the highest rate of average exploitation by the Government is taken to be at Rs. 2-10-4 per acre the difference between Rs. 1-15-4 and 2-10-4 and that between 0-15-4 and 2-10-4 per acre of cultivated area is the bribe which the Dictatorship pays to the feudal landlord, the big zamindars, for their support to its adulterated maintenance against all revolutionary attempts and against "further attempts at democratisation." The extent of the bribe to this parasitic class can be gauged from the fact that while in Bengal the Dictatorship receives Rs. 3 crores from the peasants' produce the zamindars are left with 10 crores. In U.P. the British Dictatorship receives Rs. 694 lacs from a total known expropriation of Rs. 2135 lacs, leaving 1441 lacs to the parasitic class. This is on the acknowledged realisation. But in addition to this the wealth-producing labour power of the peasants exploited by feudal usage is not calculated. "The actual fixture of rentals as between the landlord and the tenant has been a matter of bargaining in which the Government has taken no direct part" said Sir Malcolm Hailey to the Legislative Council on 20th July 1931. The Dictatorship need not take a direct part but every rupee enhanced by it in the land revenue adds Rs. 2/- to the feudal land-holder's pocket. Thus the Dictatorship bribes and carries with it a big feudal train to assist its work. It may not directly assist in the fixture of rentals but it lends its bayonets when the peasantry wants to reduce them. The expropriation of the peasantry by a class that has no function to discharge in social production creates a quadrangular struggle in Indian political and economic field. We may take the annual expropriation of the peasantry by 12½ million rent receivers at about 180 crores. It represents an accumulation in the hands of the feudal class of 57 per cent of the total paid-up capital of all the joint stock companies in India, which was about 267 crores in 1927-28 according to Government statistics. It means that a few

million land owners receive in 18 months more than the total joint stock capital of British India. The Indian bourgeoisie discharges a social function in production and distribution and is economically and politically an active class as yet, except in cases where it has become absolutely monopolistic and divorced from the social function as is the case in Bombay Textiles, Tata Iron etc. The Indian bourgeoisie finds it difficult to assemble the liquid resources for investment in the face of the fierce imperialist opposition and competition; while a sum which would represent 67 per cent return on their capital is annually swallowed by a feudal class and is not made available as a fund for the averaging of capitalist profits. The second loss to the Indian bourgeoisie is that a peasantry, whose whole production is expropriated by feudal rights carrying no progressive economic function, is a poor buyer of industrial goods. Thus the Indian bourgeoisie, and, for that matter, even the British bourgeoisie find their economic class-interest in conflict with feudal landlordism. The class conscious economy of the national bourgeoisie put the issue quite plainly, though ultimately they do not fail to point out alternatives in order to avoid a class-struggle. Speaking about agriculturist's incomes, which are not taxed, Professors Shah and Khambattah say: "It is presumed that the land revenue these people pay is the counter-part in the direct taxation of the income taxes that the industrial and commercial classes have to pay. It may be so in the temporarily settled ryotwari provinces, where in fact the individual incomes are so exceedingly small that no human or civilised system of taxation can possibly tax them. But in the case of the zamindari, land holders and especially those whose land revenue has been settled once for all several generations since, the situation is wholly different. The income in this case is almost wholly unearned: it is utterly independent of the personal exertions of the owner and finally it is steadily growing independent of the activity of the owner. Thanks to the zamindars owners are themselves exempted from any share in the demand from them for the

purposes of the State; and though there is in most provinces enjoying such settlement some sort of landlord and tenant legislation framed with a view to safeguard the rights of the tenants under these landlords, the latter have a thousand and one means of defrauding the peasants of their rights and privileges" (Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India, page 300). The main point of the bourgeois complaint is not so much against receiving rent as against its not being taxed like their incomes. The Indian bourgeoisie which still takes some personal part in industrial activity, unlike the monopolist coupon cutters of the Imperialist countries, grumples against the landlords "coupon-cuttings" without any activity. Like a brilliant modern child it points out to Imperialism, that its most ancient brother is going tax-free while it is being taxed simply because it is brilliant enough to increase the producing forces and thereby its own incomes in a concentrated, intensive and palpable form. It does not advocate the abolition of landlordism but asks for taxation and the Imperialist Dictatorship, faced with deficits, is inclined to agree with it!

The Imperialist Dictatorship representing the interests of the British bourgeoisie sees that this feudal class is unnecessary and parasitic, that it does not discharge any necessary social function. Therefore, it allows a certain criticism of feudalism by the intelligentsia of the bourgeoisie. Even the Anglo-Indian papers take part in it and a most responsible member of the Dictatorship. Sir Basil Blackett observed in a lecture before the Royal Society of Arts in London: "True economic progress in India" will not be fully realisable till India sloughs off its "mediaeval abstractions". Sir Basil wants to hide his true class outlook behind a very clumsy phrase "mediaeval abstractions". What does he mean? The characteristic of the mediaeval age is feudal economy and its "abstraction" is the ideological and social superstructure that arises from that economy.

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Bourgeois economy having grown within the feudal structure, "the abstraction", the feudal rights of *nazrana*, serf labour, the existence of big landholders and their influence in politics become a hindrance. They require to be overthrown. The conflict begins in the ideological field. But that conflict generates revolutionary forces and as Sir Basil Blackett himself observes, "more than once since the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (which it may be remembered gave a share of the partnership to the bourgeoisie as shown before) as for example during the controversy over the Reserve Bank Bill, the Central and Provincial Legislatures have borne witness to the possibilities of severe friction between urban and rural interests; and the inevitable predominance of the urban intellectual among the politically minded Indians gives constant preoccupation to the Government and especially to the district officer." ("Leader", February 2, 1930.) The 'mediaeval setting' is the political bulwark of Imperialism and is not economically a direct competitor to the British bourgeois interest as the Indian bourgeoisie is. The Indian bourgeoisie cannot progress without the overthrow of feudal aristocracy. British goods can find no market without releasing from the feudal blood-sucker a few drops at least for the peasant, of course, in the end to be yielded to the Imperialist bourgeoisie. Hence, the Simon Commission suggest reconsideration of the permanent settlement, and imposing a tax on the zamindari incomes. The bourgeois interests support Tenancy Bills but all of them refuse to pursue the opposition to the end, because the end means rousing the peasantry against landlordism, against the money-lenders. Once the revolutionary tide is on who can say in the present epoch where it will stop? It boils and grows over into a revolution against the whole bourgeois order.

The feudal class recognises this class cleavage. It is not we alone that speak it out. Economic social reality is a thing that makes the most rabid anti-Communists provide the base for the argument of the Communists. Marxism is born out of class reality and that reality, in a time of sharpening class-struggle, begins to recognise our premises but refuses our solution. The consciousness of parasitism of the fact that it has ceased to be in any way a socially necessary class even to the smallest extent, in the present stage of the world productive forces, has downed upon

a section of the intellectual representatives of decayed feudalism, in the brains of a feudal lord, who is trying ideologically to grow into a modern bourgeois. And nothing can give more pleasure than to quote in support from the speech of Rai Rajeshwar Bali at the Zamindar Conference held in Rai Bareilly (19-7-31). He said: "We must all remember that no class or community can survive for long which ceases to be of value to society. This is particularly true at the present moment when the world forces are acting against the retention of institution connected with Capitalism of any kind. Therefore, we must actively and incessantly demonstrate our value." (The Leader, July 25, 1931) Rai Rajeshwar Bali confounded his feudal class with the modern bourgeoisie. Still he is to be congratulated on his decision "to demonstrate the value" of feudalism to Indian society. He proceeded to outline the basis of this demonstration and most actively insisted on three very profound proposals. The landlords instead of becoming dancing monuments in the Butler Palace after the notorious leadership of Sir Harcourt Butler and the late Raja of Mahmudabad, in the realm of demonstrating their "unlimited values" in the "mediaeval romantic setting" of society life should follow "Mahatmaji's cult of simple life and swadeshi." Absentee landlordism should be converted into presentee landlordism and the rural areas should be reconstructed. What is the net result of this demonstration of value of landlordism? If all the landholders spend a hundred thousand rupees on Khadi instead of ten lakhs on silk the 14½ crores of rent they take from the peasantry cannot be reduced by a single pie. Their savings of nine lakhs are not returned to their tenants. An absentee tyrant does not become less demoniac by his presence, rather he adds to it. Reconstructing rural area has only one meaning to strike at the root of expropriation of the peasantry by rents. This is impossible for landlordism because it means the abolition of landlordism and construction not of the rural area but of its own coffin. The ultimate result of all this advice is a reconstruction of the fallen tombs of dead *pirs* and temples of nondescript Mahants, while the bones of the peasant sink into the grounds of his mud hut under the blows of the Attachment Officer. Landlordism has no value in the development of the productive

forces. It only hinders them by exacting a tribute by reason of its old production relations. Its only value lies in its abolition from social life and survival in the museum of Indian revolution.

**98. Pandit Jawahar Lal's opinion—his welcome to land-owners—even if feudalism is substituted by Capitalism expropriation of the peasantry through the capitalist market remains**

We have seen so far the fundamental basis of the production relations of the peasant toiler, that prevail over 3/4th of the cultivated area of India. It is that the peasant in order to exert his energies in extracting useful and necessary things from nature must first agree, has to agree, to surrendering half the fruits of this toil as rent to a class which holds the monopoly of the soil. The moneylenders oppression is in a great measure due to this feudal expropriation. The dearth of capital for the bourgeoisie arises from this sterilisation of its supply at its very source. Commodity movements are crippled due to this feudal loot; and bourgeois industry groans under the heavy burden placed on its shoulders by the tribute to the landlord, which its raw material carries on its head. Imperialism threatened with a competitive native bourgeoisie and a revolutionary proletariat and peasantry refuses to displace its feudal allies and the Indian bourgeoisie, unable to fight, releases a few intellectuals to shout for nationalisation of land. Now it is a well-known fact that Communists advocate nationalisation of land and the distribution of it to the landless and small peasants. Vide programme (Exh. P. 90). This is interpreted by some as "the extension of the Ryotwari System" to the whole of India. For example, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, who is supposed to be a Socialist, is against the feudal land tenure. Speaking at the Lahore Congress (December 1929) he said (in his Presidential address): "We have among us many big landowners and we welcome them. But they must realise that the ownership of large estates by individuals which is the outcome or a state resembling the old feudalism of Europe, is a rapidly disappearing phenomenon all over the world. Even in countries which are the strongholds of Capitalism the large estates are being split up and



given to the peasantry who work on them. In India also we have large areas where the system of peasant proprietorship prevails and we shall have to extend this all over the country." The Pandit as committed many fallacies here. Large estates owned by individuals do not necessary resemble feudalism. In the U.S.A. large estates are owned by capitalists who cultivate them by employing hired land workers and with machines. In no way does this resemble feudalism. The characteristic of feudalism is not the largeness of an estate. Even an estate of 100 acres may be feudal. The difference is that under feudalism the cultivator may own his instruments of production. When he produces crops he is left with the minimum of the produce for his living and the whole surplus value or rent is appropriated by the landlord. The cultivator also lives under certain feudal obligations of giving free labour and gifts to the landlord which is not prevalent under capitalist agriculture where the peasant does not own the instruments, is a hired land worker and has no personal obligations of the feudal type. He is free to sell his labour power anywhere. In countries where thorough bourgeois revolutions took place, it is true that the feudal estates were split up and distributed. For a time the peasants thrived, but out of them grew rich middle and poor peasants. Land again became concentrated in the hands of agrarian capital and the peasantry was reduced to land workers. The extension of ryotwari may be said to be middle stage in the above European process, but as we have seen, it does not prevent the growth of rent exploiters. The Pandit did not care to know why even in countries which are the strongholds of Capitalism feudal agriculture is breaking down. Simply because its break up helps the growth of Capitalism. The Pandit may welcome the big feudal landowners who on his own proposition are not required by ryotwari nor even by Capitalism. So the welcome can be only from their own class-fellows. The Pandit when he welcomes them thus becomes a feudal chieftain? He may say he wants them to break up their estates and welcomes them for that. A class cannot consent to break up its own bones. Either they must break the peasantry or the peasantry will break them. If the Pandit welcomes them on which side then does he stand?

However, though not in deed yet in theory, the bourgeois intellectuals recognise the necessity of the break up of feudal estates and handing them over to the peasantry. But what does the bourgeoisie itself propose to do with the peasantry, supposing the latter gets all those estates, is freed from the feudal burden, and allowed to cultivate its own plot of land and help the building up of Capitalism? In the modern epoch, the whole of Indian agricultural production, whether on ryotwari or zamindari estates, is ruled by the capitalists' exchange market through its prices. The value of wheat, cotton, rice etc. even in the remotest corners of India is subject to the changes in the markets as far away as New York. Whatever is left to the peasant, after his big leeches—the money-lender and the landlord or lessee—are satisfied, is attacked and expropriated by the capitalist market. The process of exchange between the peasant and the capitalist trader is always an unequal exchange.

This is not only the Communist viewpoint. The Banking Inquiry Committee appointed by the Government of India in its report says the same thing. "The Bombay Committee point out that some of the practices in unorganised markets, such as fixation of prices secretly and reduction of prices on the ground of alleged inferior quality, act to the detriment of the agriculturist....." In paragraph 261 of their report they (the U.P. Committee) refer to the practice in a novel form of the well-known evils of cornering and dumping; they say that "there is some evidence to show that exporting firms are occasionally guilty of dumping agricultural produce to facilitate purchase at lower prices..... More than one Provincial Committees have adverted to the fact that the agricultural produce is forced on the market at certain periods in such a way that the farmers fail to obtain the best prices". (Pages 210, 211.) This holds good not only in a backward peasantry but even in such countries as Canada, U.S.A., Germany, England etc. The inequality arises from the nature of the methods of production. Production of industrial goods, whether of consumption or of capital goods, is standardised, concentrated and centralised in huge international combines with a price policy that extends over continents and which is not subject to any

fluctuations. The trader possesses an advantage of training, organising, literacy, the support of banks etc. in his negotiations with the peasant. For example, if the exchange value of one seer of wheat represents, in a given period a yard of cloth, in the actual process of exchange the peasant is bound to be mulcted of at least half a foot of cloth. In addition to this there comes to the help of the capitalist market, the highly deceptive medium of exchange, which is money. Money hides the real value relations. A token coin worth four annas serves to exchange commodities worth four times its real value. The currency system of every country is controlled by the bourgeoisie of that country and it is used by them as a whole for cheating the vast mass of peasantry in its own and other countries, and secondly by the various sections of the bourgeoisie against one another. The individual isolated peasant is no match for modern Capitalism in the exchange process, and even when the productive forces cheapen consumption goods, the fullest advantage of it never comes to him.

Another handicap which the small peasant suffers against Capitalism is the one which, in industry, is the difference between small scale and large scale production. The per acre production of a small peasant is far less than that of a capitalist farm and therefore its cost of production is higher. In industry the result of this would be that the plant with bad and limited technique must invest more capital and work like that of the big plant or it goes into losses. In this process a levelling of technique takes place. Capitalist competition levels capitalist profits which constantly try to find their average. This does not take place in agriculture, because their technique cannot be introduced as easily. A small holding cannot be made big easily. In industry one plant by reason of a secret process may get differential profits for a time. But such secrets do not remain so very long. In agriculture the land is limited. Therefore it exacts a monopoly price for the owner unless it is nationalised and made exchangeable like other commodities. The owner claims absolute rent, whether you get profit or living thereby or not, he does not care. Since it is limited you cannot defy him (by threatening to cultivate air or some such thing). The only alternative is to overthrow his monopoly ownership. Secondly, its limitedness and the need of all available food-stuffs

for the world population, keep the small peasant going because the price of land produce due to the above two factors is determined not by the cost of production on the best land (as in industry) but on the worst land. But this does not mean that the small peasant rules the prices. There are times of crisis when Capitalism leaves nothing to the vast mass of people to buy with and a fall in world prices occurs by what is called over-production. The small peasant then cannot get even half his cost of production with the result that he sells below it and makes up the balance by starvation. The slow starvation and expropriation through which he passes in normal times becomes accentuated in crisis.

The bankruptcy of the nationalist bourgeoisie in finding a way-out for the peasant from his expropriation by the Capitalist Market is best illustrated in times of crisis, which refutes the allegation that the application of Marxism to Indian conditions would be a hot-house growth or unwarranted. The periodical recurring crises of Capitalism lay bare all its contradictions, which are then understood in their true perspective. The utter bankruptcy of the Congress bourgeois politicians and economists in solving the peasant problem by merely harping on reduction of rent and revenue is repeated over the whole of India from their own mouths, and our programme arises directly on the ruins of their programmes.

**99. Some utterances on the complete ruin of the peasantry and its inability to pay rent due to fall in prices—examples from U.P., Bengal, the Punjab and Karnatic**

The present crisis of world Capitalism of which India is a part and contributory factor is expressed in the agrarian area in the fall of prices. The fall is not a cause of the crisis, as the bourgeoisie wants the people to believe, but only a symptom. It is itself a result which in its turn produces its own cycle of results which is very beautifully expressed by Marx in his manifesto (P. 21). Still let us confine ourselves only to the 'prices' problem, the unsaleability of goods on the Capitalist Market and the consequent question of the peasant's obligations as to rent and revenue, which are fixed in money. The Honorary Secretary of the U.P. Zemindars'

Association, Mr. Hari Raj Saroop, who is not expected to exaggerate the losses of the peasantry for fear of injuring the interests of his class, compares the cost of production and the proceeds realised from the produce per acre of wheat and sugarcane in Muzaffarnagar district, which had the honour to send its District Magistrate to conduct the inquiry into this case. He says: "The average produce of sugarcane in irrigated tracts in normal years is 15 maunds per acre which will at the most fetch Rs. 75. The tenant's minimum expenses in producing an acre of sugarcane will be somewhat as follows:

	Rs.	as.	p.
Rent and Revenue	20	0	0
Manure	10	0	0
Ploughing, Harrowing, Weeding and Binding	25	0	0
Irrigation with labour for watering	12	0	0
Seed	15	0	0
Cutting and Collecting	7	8	0
Making Gur, with cartage to Market	22	8	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

So the tenant gets in sugarcane in spite of all his labours about 35 per cent less than what he actually spends. The case of wheat is still worse because the tenant produces on an average of 12 maunds of wheat worth Rs. 30/- and spends about Rs. 62/- thus getting a return of less than half". From this account what would be the obvious conclusion so far as payment of rent and revenue is concerned? If the peasant refuses to pay the whole of the rent, revenue and water charges, Rs. 32/-, still his fixed cash liability on expenses remains at Rs. 80/-, a deficit of Rs. 5/- per acre on sugarcane. On an acre of wheat the loss being more than 50 per cent, if the peasant refuses the whole rental and water charge he will have a deficit of Rs. 15/- per acre. In such circumstances a demand to reduce the rent and revenue by half does not mean a demand to save the peasant from distress but to save Imperialism and landlordism, who are not entitled even to a pice of rent, granting for a moment that they are sold in normal circumstances.

Two Congress leaders of Rai Bareli, Messrs Sitla Sahai and Mata Pershad Misra in a statement on behalf of the Congress say, "putting the rabi and kharif both together we find that even in cases of gram and dhan which fetch good price, the tenant cannot pay his rent and live; if he has sown barley or peas or jowar or wheat he has to borrow if he wants to pay". (Leader, May 5, 1931.) Such a statement means that the British Dictatorship and feudal landlordism must renounce all their demands on The peasantry, because if the peasant has to live he is not in a position to surrender any part of his produce in order to maintain the Dictatorship and the feudal class. The excellent gentlemen who made the statement realised this implication and three lines below they suddenly found that the peasant can pay 50 per cent, "if Government themselves make any inquiry they will also come to the same conclusion as we have, ~~viz.~~ that it is economically impossible for the kisans to pay more than 50 per cent". Just three lines above they say, "if the kisan has to live he cannot pay". That is their ~~first~~ conclusion. Then they forget their own conclusion and say that Government will arrive after inquiry at the same conclusion. And what is that same? That the kisan cannot pay more than 50 per cent. Wherefrom has sprung this sudden accretion of money to 50 per cent ability to pay rent? Obviously from the fear that non-payment means dissolution of all the existing production relations, of class rule and the Dictatorship. In his manifesto to the U.P. peasants and zamindars, Mahatma Gandhi asked the peasants to pay 50 per cent or 75 per cent of their usual rent. While explaining this he said: "Indeed an inquiry made in over 300 villages in the east of the province shows, that the price of the produce at the present rate does not even cover the rents payable." This makes no allowance for the cost of production. When the kisan can pay nothing, not even for his food, he is asked to pay for the maintenance of Imperialism and the feudal landholders. In the same article where he said the above, he says "Congressmen on their part will see to it that kisans will scrupulously fulfil their obligations to the zamindars." (Young India, May 1931.) The expropriation of the peasant by Capitalism is very well-described by the Indian Chamber of Commerce on the

question of relief to Bengal peasants, in their letter to the Government of India. "The consumers and shippers who keep the statistics of the world's demand and supply at their finger-ends will only be too ready to secure supplies at as low a price as possible. With his appalling poverty, illiteracy, and submissiveness the Indian agriculturist is seriously handicapped for the purposes of bargaining and he always finds himself at a serious disadvantage, in his dealings with those who want the products of his labour." (Times of India 30/7/31.) Please remember that this is not written in any Communist manifesto but by the Indian Merchants' Chamber. A Committee of 20 zamindars of the Kisan Sabha of Shaikhpura in Punjab in their report of inquiry said: "The Committee has most carefully studied the condition of present rabi harvest; no acre produces more than 8 maunds of grain. This grain fetches in the market about Rs. 8/- and the revenue and water rates in this district range between Rs. 12/- and 14/- per acre. Not only is there a deficit of Rs. 4/- to 6/- but absolutely nothing is left to the peasant to enable him to maintain his family. It should be remembered that he has also left nothing to meet his expenses in connection with the next sowing for the kharif crop". The conclusion from the finding can only be one that if the peasant has to live he cannot pay for the maintenance of the Dictatorship or the rentier parasite. He must dissolve the class rule over him. But the Committee does not say that. It says: "the Government should therefore either take 1/10 of the amount of produce in kind or charge 1/3 of the present revenue assessment charges." That is Government should add to the starvation and indebtedness of the peasant. The Dictatorship is obliged for such kindly advice and acts upon it, with the result that according to the Land Revenue Administration Report of the Punjab for the year ended in September 1930, the forces of the Dictatorship were let loose with greater vigour and the number of processes issued against the lambardars and owners rose to 19,409 being an increase of nearly 30 per cent over 1929. At the Annual General Meeting of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce the Chairman said (April 15, 1931); "The cost of production per acre is very much higher than the price it yields and the payment of land revenue by the zamindar (in the Punjab sense) has become almost an impossibility, so much so that most of the zamindars have had to part with the ornaments of

their womenfolk and in some cases undergo worse indignities for the purpose of paying land revenue." The learned loyal gentlemen ended by asking Government to set up sales organisations as a remedy. From Gujrat, where the peasantry is said to have won victories in their struggle against the ruin and starvation under the leadership of the Congress bourgeoisie, we get the same picture. An examination of 750 family budgets was made in the Matar Talluqa by Mr. Kumar Appa of the Gujrat National University and member of the Congress Experts' Committee on the question of adjustment of debts. The report says: "Before providing for the depreciation, land revenue, and unpaid interest, actual receipt in cash and in kind excluding all extraordinary expenses and capital items, the analysis shows the following:

Deficits of Rs	Families
1 to 100	139
101 to 300	334
301 to 500	145
501 to 1000	74
Over 1000	9
Others	49
	<hr/> 750 <hr/>

Mr. S. D. Kalelkar writing on this says: "only 25 per cent of the peasants are feeding on their crop. The people will have nothing to eat even if they are to pay only half of the revenue". And yet all the holy gentlemen of the Sabarmati Ashram were telling the peasants to borrow money and pay their tribute to Imperialism. Finally for those who would throw the blame of extravagance, inefficiency or dishonesty on the peasantry, here are four figures of the cost of cultivation and price of yield on a Government farm in the Dharwar district:



	Per Acre					
	Expenditure			Yield		
	Rs.	as.	p.	Rs.	as.	p.
Jowar	20	12	2	34	0	0
Cotton	17	9	0	18	0	0
Peas	29	3	0	37	0	0
Wheat	7	12	0	10	0	0

On an average of the four acres there is a surplus of Rs. 5/- per acre. Why? Because it is a Government farm. It has the best instruments, best bullocks, expert advice, and best manure. It is free from the demands of village workers like the sweepers, smiths, potters etc. whose rights are traditionally fixed. It is free from the moneylenders. It can sell in the best market, and so on and so forth. If all these burdens are put over the above accounts the normal surplus would soon become a deficit. The 'Karmavir', which on the basis of the above facts wants to advocate the cause of the peasantry, is not, however, willing to tell the peasants to feed themselves first. It proposes to starve the peasants and pay 1/3 to the State and demands for the peasant "the right to become insolvent like the moneylenders." (quoted by "the Kesari", Poona City, 21-2-32.) This champion of the peasantry fails to know that the right of the bourgeoisie to become insolvent is a mutual arrangement of the robber class to accommodate each other's failures and start again their career. Can the robber allow his victim when he is paying him a visit to declare that he is insolvent and therefore would like to be excused? That would mean suicide for the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the workers and peasants as a class are creators of wealth. They are out to seize what is forcibly taken away from them. To tell them to fight for a right of insolvency is to show one's own insolvency of ideas.

**100. The bourgeois intellectual will object to deduce from this that the bourgeoisie through its prices machinery expropriates the peasant**

You may point to the fact that the crash of prices affects both agrarian and industrial prices. The answer to this is furnished by

the Indian Chamber of Commerce. The fall in prices of agrarian products is greater than in the manufactures. "It is, I suppose, the usual order of things in a depression of this kind that the price of raw products falls more sharply than that of manufactured goods", said Lord Irwin in his address to the Associated Chambers of Commerce in December 1930. The same thing was said by Lala Shri Ram in his Presidential Address to the Federation of Indian Chambers in March 1931. So, in the falling prices the centralised monopolistic organisation of the bourgeoisie reaps a differential gain as between the exchange of agricultural and manufactured goods. It may be said that this happens in very abnormal times and deductions and programmes of a party cannot be made from such data. But the same thing appears even if we take the reverse case, that of rising prices. The index numbers of wholesale prices in India, before and after the war began, show the speed with which agrarian prices are outstripped.

**Index number of Wholesale Prices—India 1873=100**

Year	Exported Articles	Imported Articles
1913	154	117
1916	163	236
1918	199	289

This shows that whether in rise or in fall the capitalist exchange market gains in relative speed either way. This relative difference is reduced in such countries as America, Canada and Germany, where agrarian goods at their point of wholesale disposal are under the control of combines or banks. There both the agents of exchange, being highly organised wings of capitalist finance, cut down each other's differential gains. But this does not happen in countries like India where the sale of agrarian goods from the big internal or external markets is very much scattered. That is why in Canada and U.S.A. the agrarian bourgeoisie could hold the wheat from the market for a year or two by assembling it under the credit banks. Such an action was impossible for the Indian or Chinese bourgeoisie and so it clamoured at the doors of the British Dictatorship for financial help in imitating the American Farm Board but it was naturally refused such help. In the first place because the Imperialist Dictatorship is not interested in protecting

the Indian bourgeoisie against the British. Secondly because it was too insolvent to do this huge operation. However, whether this is done or not, the real cultivator gains nothing. If you say that the fall in prices is abnormal and hence the cultivator is hit and want to infer that in rising prices he is well-off, it is a wrong conclusion. The Indian bourgeoisie in its fight against the 18d. ratio said that the fall in prices hit the cultivator. It was right; but when it said that the rise in prices that would follow on the 16d. exchange would benefit the cultivator, it was exaggerating the situation. The rise in prices fetched by his products never reaches the cultivator actually. The fall is passed on to him but not the rise. Similarly the rise in prices of manufactured goods is rapidly passed on to him, but not the fall. Exactly the reverse process takes place with regard to the workers. The war boom in agriculture did not benefit the poor and the middle peasantry but only the rich peasants and landlords. The Indian bourgeoisie tells the peasantry in zamindari areas that the extension of ryotwari will make it a master of its produce and hence a gainer by good price movements. What do we find in Bardoli? The contradictions of the bourgeoisie when collected from two places and put together, give good matter for laughter. Mr. Mahadev Desai says this about "the abnormal rise in price of food grains and of cotton." "Evidence was led everywhere to show that the cotton prices far from benefiting agriculturists had ruined them especially the tenants" and the officers (of the Government Inquiry Committee) accepting it observe, "that the cotton boom was by no means an unmixed blessing from the ryot's point of view; indeed on a consideration of all these circumstances it may be regarded as less a blessing than a curse." Where did the blessing of high prices vanish? It was pocketed by the holders of land who increase the rent charged to their sub-tenants and thus expropriated the cultivator of his gains. But this robbery is very clear in zamindari areas. In the falling prices the cultivator has to meet his fixed rent in money; but in rising prices the gains are very rapidly robbed by the landlord. The following table will show that feudal landlordism is worse than the Imperialist Dictatorship. The Congress Report on the U.P. agrarian distress gives the following: "If we compare the prices of the food grains and the rent and

revenue demand of 1898-99 with those of 1914-15 and 1930-31 we get the following numbers:

*Index Numbers*

Year	Price	Revenue	Rent
1898-99	100	100	100
1914-15	117	105	131
1930-31	80	113	160

"The figures show that while compared to those in 1898-99 prices have gone down by 20 per cent, the revenue has increased by 13 per cent and rents by 60 per cent."

Dt. 2.12.31

That is the only conclusion of the learned committee. But there is another which we cannot fail to draw, that the rise in prices was snatched away from the peasant by rent and revenue. While prices increased by 17 per cent, rents increased by 31 per cent. A second conclusion is that between two exploiters the one belonging to the home is more ruthless than the foreign. The zamindar who is asked to become a Janaka or Omar Khalif and whom the Congress report calls "brother", while he has set fire to villages and dishonouring peasant women (as in Pipri in U.P.), that class of robbers is shown by the table to be five times greater parasitic than the Dictatorship. The question of the advantage from prices is a question of class and not a general question, as it is made out. The general conclusion applicable even in a land like the Punjab can be stated in the words of Mr. Darling supported by Dr. Mann that "the large landowners have profited a lot by the rise in prices.....the small owners have suffered." ("The Punjab Peasant" pp. 149, 244.) Thus whether in ryotwari or zamindari, whether in times of high prices or low prices, the poor peasant cultivator enriches the capitalist class, landlords and generally the whole parasitic structure. Even if he is freed from landlordism, even if the feudal estates are broken up by the poor peasantry will not prosper unless the capitalist social relations are overthrown and the workers and poor peasants directly govern production and distribution. The

Socialist Society, the Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and peasantry alone can achieve the task of destroying the phenomena of poverty in plenty. The programme of the nationalist bourgeoisie, whether inside or outside the Congress, does not aim at the destruction of rent but only its limitation; and even this limitation is not governed by the needs of the peasantry but by the needs of the bourgeois State if it is theirs or the Imperialist Dictatorship, if it makes a pact with them. Without the abolition of rent the growth of parasitism, whether in zamindari or ryotwari, cannot be abolished. The programme of the bourgeoisie does not fight for abolition of feudal landlordism. Therefore, it cannot develop the productive forces of the country even on capitalist lines. The bourgeoisie does not advocate cancellation of peasant debts but their transference to bourgeois agrarian banks, controlled from the industrial banking centres, or merely their "scrutiny". But the bourgeoisie has no resources for such a huge conversion of nine hundred crores of debts at not less than 25 per cent interest into one of 5 or 10 per cent, nor has it the strength to meet the opposition of the holders of this debt. The bourgeoisie cannot help the peasantry to receive even the exchange market price of its produce, nor is it in a position to stop the expropriation of the peasant by the prices operations, because Capitalism itself is unable to control the anarchy of its social order. Therefore, the whole of the radical Congress programme resolves into one of reduction of land revenue. But the fixed money terms of land revenue, even if they are reduced to suit the fallen prices, do not rule out the seizure of surplus values from the peasant; and before the reformist measure comes into operation a complete ruin and loot of the peasantry are carried out so that even the reform does not help. Thus the economic programme of reconstruction formulated by Capitalism breaks against the rocks of class contradictions of Indian society. What then remains is only our programme. The feudal landlords and the money-lenders have necessarily to be deprived of their so-called dues, debts have to be repudiated, rent abolished and land handed over to the peasantry if society in India is to live and progress.

The big bourgeoisie with its strangle-hold on production and distribution, demanding its tribute from the workers, has to be removed. The carrying out of this social reconstruction is impossible without political power. Hence a struggle for independence becomes a necessity.

The mutual contradictions of the three parasitic groups in India, the Indian bourgeoisie, feudalism and British Imperialism, which have been shown so far, prove clearly that India is not in anyway an exceptional country from the other countries in the world, in the matter of its economic, social and political growth. It is within the grip of capitalist development, it is subject to all the laws of capitalist economy. It has given birth to all the modern classes that are usually found in any European capitalist country with exactly the same class characteristics. Not only has it got classes, economically and politically well marked from each other, but it has got a fierce class war also. Class war exists where classes exist. In former India there were different classes, hence a different type of class war. Today the classes have changed, under bourgeois economy, their content and form. But the one essential content—that of exploitation of surplus values by the exploiters from the exploited, remains. Since the form and content of classes have changed, the form and content of the class war have changed. It also shows that those who say that we can and should postpone the class war among us till we have settled with our “national enemy” have failed to understand the warring trends in our economy. The facts given so far indicate clearly how one class is putting down the other and living on its back. Does that process stop because we are engaged in the glorious struggle based on love and peace? It does not. Hence the proletariat and peasantry also cannot stop the class war. It inevitably arises from the economy of our day. That is the reason why the slogan of “Down with Imperialism” has to be simultaneously joined with that of “Down with Capitalism”. The national struggle is a part of the class-struggle. In the present epoch of proletarian revolutions and in the Indian conditions where the bourgeoisie refuses to fight and where feudalism is all along against the national struggle, the class-struggle is bound to become acute side by side with the national struggle also.

**SECTION 4.—The condition of the petty-bourgeoisie and working-class—the inevitability of the revolutionary class- struggle: paras 101-105**

**101. The position of the petty-bourgeoisie—incapable of revolutionary struggle—not being a class it uses caste—bankruptcy of their programme with regard to the masses gives way to our programme**

It has been stated so far that the conclusions of Marxism and Leninism with regard to the peasantry arise directly from real life in India as much correctly as they arise from that of other countries. It has also been shown that the material basis of the revolutionary struggle of the peasantry exists on the Indian soil and not in the chambers of the Comintern headquarters as is alleged. The same thing applies to the material basis of the national and class-struggle as it affects the petty-bourgeois and the industrial workers amongst whom we have also worked.

The petty-bourgeois wage-earners, “salaried employees” as they call themselves, occupy an important position in production and distribution, in the management of capitalist society. In India the British Dictatorship is one of their biggest employers. They manage the vast operations of the industrial plants in their separate minor and major functions. The office machinery of Capitalism is worked by them. Capitalism uses them as teachers, priests, journalists, writers and poets to spread bourgeois culture and make sure that the masses become ideologically the supporters of its system even though they economically are exploited by it. The big mass of this intellectual proletariat is poverty-stricken and over-worked. All their life they cherish the dreams of rising to the respectable heights of their bourgeois masters. Many of them desire to become ‘independent’ by starting small shops and trades and kicking indignantly at their office tables. But soon they are ruined by the mighty competition of Big Finance and return to their old post of slavery. Possessing literacy and culturally bourgeois they despise the workers and peasants. When hard pressed by Capitalism they flirt with the revolutionary

movement of the masses. When promised a prospect of good salaries and ambitious rise they turn counter-revolutionaries and become the slave drivers of the bourgeoisie against the workers and peasants.

The largest part of this petty-bourgeoisie does not get more than Rs. 2/- a day. Being unable to convert their women and young children into workers like those of the proletariat and peasantry, their income of one earning member of the family becomes divided amongst several claimants. The family of the petty-bourgeois in India is exceptionally large owing to the fact that he still holds to the prejudices of the pre-bourgeois culture and is thereby unable to divide the family. Holding fast to the reactionary prejudices of the old Hindu system, the Hindu petty-bourgeoisie which by far forms the majority in India, has to maintain in the single family unit a large number of widows, which too ordinarily would have been distributed over a section of earning members. Thus even where they can get better wages, they can never raise their standard of living.

A highly industrialised society requires a great deal of accounting to be done. The needs of modern production and distribution have to carry out the inventory of the world in all matters. Without the highly organised system of accounting modern large scale production and international exchange of goods would not be possible. This gives birth to a vast number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals to run the machinery of bourgeois society. India being not highly industrialised it does not generate such a big class as other countries. But the supply of this class of salaried workers is far in excess of the demand. Thinking that industrialisation will feed them, they support all schemes of national industries and march with the bourgeoisie against the workers, when the latter strike for better standard of living, because they are taught that high wages and low hours for workers mean less profits, less industrialisation and therefore less employment for them. They look to the five thousand lucrative posts of the British bureaucracy and want Indianisation so that their problem may be solved. Growing sentimental they suffer



heroic deaths in the name of nationalism, many a time without exactly knowing what they are doing it for. But not possessing the creative power of labour, not possessing the confidence of the proletariat that wields the "key positions" of social life they keep on yearning for some miracle that may change society on to a better track and Imperialism to a better heart.

Though they consider themselves as belonging to a superior class, yet Capitalism uses them as no better than the working-class or even worse. The working-class is a producer of wealth and hence a superior class power. Its strike stops creation of wealth and hence it is much dreaded. Have you ever seen the petty-bourgeoisie striking and making the whole capitalist imperialist machine tremble for life? On the contrary whenever Capitalism has been threatened with dethronement the petty-bourgeois intellectuals have as a class always run to its help. In England, shoals of them rushed out of the Universities to become blacklegs in the General Strike of 1926. They suffer from unemployment like the workers. New inventions of machines for accounting, telegraphing and telephoning displace them in an ever-increasing degree from employment. Concentration and centralisation of capital, amalgamation of several houses and plants into big combines threw hundreds of them on the street. In an enquiry in Bombay more than half of them were found in debt. While reading their morning patriotic paper over the tea cup they dream of their "motherland" being thoroughly "Indianised," which in plain language means they think of their own prospects wherein, instead of the European boss, they shall be commanding others. The patriotic Indian bourgeoisie having been compelled to pay high rates for imported technicians at first ran up a huge propaganda for technical and scientific education for the young and promising sons of India. But when the young sons were found to be too many they were offered half the foreigner's salary and most of them returning from foreign countries with expectations of a glorious future in the motherland found that the motherly bourgeoisie, that advised them to be technicians and scientists, had no industries to employ them.

Or wherever they had, they were so bound up with foreign capital that even an Indian bourgeois like Sir Purshotamdas was found rowing in the same boat with his European colleagues in defence of the Imperial Bank of India in the shareholders' meeting on the question of the employment of European staff, when Mr. A. D. Shroff, President of the Bombay Stock Exchange, questioned "why for the last six or seven years representatives of the same four English firms in Bombay.....should have occupied seats on the directorate" (Times of India, 26.8.31). After fifteen years of the most intense awakening of all classes, the "intellectual proletariat" in India is not yet convinced that after all Capitalism, whether British or Indian, is not capable of solving their problems. They have not grasped that for all practical purposes foreign Imperialism and Indian Capitalism treat them alike. In relation to them, they are an exploited class just as the working-class and peasantry are.

What does the most patriotic bourgeoisie offer them under their Swaraj or Ram Raj? The top heavy bureaucracy of the Dictatorship will be replaced by the cheaper one. But the removal of the highly paid bureaucracy is not automatically of any gain to the lower paid workers. There is no doubt that under Imperialism they are always victims of retrenchment and wage-cuts. But they have not fared better under the industries of the patriots. During the present crisis there is not a single industry that has not retrenched its clerks or reduced their wages. There is not a single patriot who has not called upon the Government to carry out retrenchment. All those pseudo-champions of Democracy in the Assembly have appreciated the example of the king and asked for equal sacrifices from all. A Nawab offers his one month's salary as a "sacrifice" before Imperialism, while pocketing a 60 per cent enhanced rent from his tenant when prices have fallen by 50 per cent, and demands an "equal sacrifice" from his poor clerk who gets Rs. 50/- a month. Equal sacrifice on unequal incomes means more starvation to the poor clerks and no loss to the parasites. In times of crisis both Imperialism and Capitalism argue that the purchasing power has been reduced so they must

retrench their employees and cut wages. That adds to the unemployed number and leads to still more reduced purchasing power. Capitalism thus moves in a vicious circle. They kick them out of the offices and factories first and then come solemnly before the people with schemes of road development or ditch filling, on which the bourgeoisie pompously announces that out of the *millions* of the unemployed who were once working for *years* in factories and offices, so many *hundreds* will be "fully employed" for so many *months*. What ambitious schemes for overcoming the death of Capitalism? It is still a solace that they have not shown the humour of employing the unemployed on digging their graves in advance or carrying out research work into the tombs of their forefathers.

The Indian bourgeoisie has nothing to offer to the vast mass of the intellectual proletariat. Whether under Imperialism or under Purna Swaraj his fate is to toil, to be unemployed in crisis and low paid in normal times—the same blind forces of capitalist parasitism are ruling them here in India just as they do in England. England is free, England is rich, England has adult suffrage and democracy and so on. Yet when the finances of its bourgeois State collapse, the axe of the Economy Committee under that ideal Purna Swaraj before whom the Pundits and Maulanas are humbly rubbing their foreheads "for a guidance from His Majesty's advisors", fell first on the unemployed (65.5 million pounds) and next in the list were the teachers (13.85 million pounds), that very section of the intellectual proletariat which spends every minute of its life in strengthening the bourgeois system by culturally enslaving the children and youths to it. In short the petty-bourgeois intellectual class has no future under Capitalism, whether in India or elsewhere. Their only hope lies in alliance with the workers and the peasants. The source of the fulfilment of their ultimate ambitions at present lies in the development of Capitalism. When Capitalism itself is declining, when the source is being dried up, how can they expect to flourish?

In the struggle for existence when pressed to the wall by the Imperialist Dictatorship and Capitalism, the petty-bourgeois

intellectuals grow desperate and a revolutionary fermentation begins in them. Imperialism and its State being their largest employer, the intellectual proletariat finds itself automatically ranged even in a small struggle for wages against the State. For them the defeat of their employer means a defeat of the Imperialist State, that is overthrow of Imperialism. The class-struggle thus very easily and obviously becomes a political struggle.

But in this they find themselves incapable of any revolutionary action without the alliance of a class. The intellectual proletariat is no class, it is an amorphous growth. If it decides to withhold its labour, it is easily replaceable. It is incapable of a solid group action, as the working-class is. Because it has no solidarity in the very basis of its economic position between the two classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Its conditions of employment are not an interdependent absolutely necessary process of co-operative functioning of labour as in a factory. The result is that when the pay of the Accounts Department in a Government office at Delhi was cut, the intellectual proletariat there continued to work but humbly petitioned to Government and refused to draw the reduced salaries for three months. In contrast to this may be witnessed the effect of the action of the workers in the Government workshops threatening to withhold their labour in case their wages were reduced or men retrenched. On one side there is submission and weakness arising from the weakness of their very social function. On the other there is the revolutionary confidence of the creators of wealth and pillars of social economy. But the petty-bourgeoisie must find some weapon to defend its interests. Failing to defend itself against the capitalist machinery it tries to fall back upon its extra economic attributes. Not being a class it uses its caste, community or province. It tries to preserve its economic standards by uniting on false basis. Brahmin and Non-Brahmin, Muslim and Hindu, Madrasi and Marathi, Gujrati and Deccani are the various brigades of the economic struggle of the petty-bourgeois clerkdom. A fierce wage competition rages amongst them and the weaker groups form caste or communal

alliances. The intellectual proletariat is one of the strongest forces behind communalism and the best proof of this is their claim of percentages in the services being reserved for each community or caste. There is perhaps not a single Legislative Council in India in which one or the other patriotic members has not asked the Dictatorship about the percentage strength of each community or caste in the Services, and this claim is in some cases being pushed to the industrial and trade offices also. The reservation of percentages is a stupid reformist tactic which weakens the petty-bourgeoisie in the struggle for higher standards of living. Because for the petty-bourgeoisie it results in a mere reshuffling and redistribution of the more or less fixed numbers of the salaried posts amongst their various communal groups. Reshuffling does not increase the gains of the petty-bourgeoisie as a whole. A school teachers' group of 100 consisting of 60 Muslims and 40 Hindus earning Rs. 100/- a day does not add a single pie to its total earnings as such by reshuffling them into 40 Muslims, 40 Hindus and 20 Sikhs. It only serves to sidetrack the teachers' struggle for higher wages and more employment. Instead of fighting capitalist system the displaced groups begin to fight the employed on the ground of communalism. However this artificial basis of struggle collapses under the press of capitalist onslaught. Capitalism breaks down all caste and communal barriers. You may say that it also sets them up very tenaciously as we find it in India. But the apparent contradiction belongs to two spheres. In the process of exploitation Capitalism recognises no caste, community, race, religion or sex. They always conform to the demands of capitalist services. Each must be in his own place running the capitalist machine according to discipline. When it comes to appropriation of the wealth produced, within the capitalist class as a whole, its internal contradictions, its competing sections then begin to search all kinds of weapons to guard their individual share of the exploited wealth. The question of communalism, of minorities is one of these weapons. The petty-bourgeoisie trying to imitate its masters or falling a victim to the false propaganda forsakes its real task until a common capitalist attempt of retrenchment, extra

work, cutting salaries reminds it of its class position and draws it out of narrow circles. The salaried employees union, clerks' union are such organisations trying to unite not on caste or communal basis but in craft or trade units. Even then not being in control of the key positions of the economic and social structure and its maintenance, their opposition even if it becomes revolutionary does not fructify unless allied with that of the workers and peasants.

### **102. The class of small traders and artisans—their programme of charkha revival—why we have disliked it?**

There is another section of the petty-bourgeoisie. It is formed of the artisans and petty traders in the villages and small towns. The artisans are ruined by the cheap factory goods invading the villages and are thrown out of their employment. The dwarfed growth of the industries in towns is unable to absorb them as wage earners. The small traders are also gradually displaced by the organised agencies of large export and import houses, who maintain millions of employees moving from place to place to make purchases of the raw products for export or internal industries. Any reference will show that the number of the artisan workers is falling and the share of the petty traders in the total trade volume is decreasing, (Exh. 290), even though, in India, we have not yet evolved the complex and widely distributed machinery of stores as in America and the artisan class still exists on a large scale. But Capitalism is attacking them steadily.

This section forms a big revolutionary force against Imperialism and Capitalism. To it imported goods represent Imperialism and the industries of the towns springing within the country represent Indian Capitalism. Both oppose its economic interests and make the ruined artisans and petty traders anti-imperialist and even sometimes anti-capitalist. Though they are thus objectively forced into the ranks of Imperialism, their subjective orientation is reactionary and utopian. Because their anti-capitalist ambitions do not look forward but backward. Their so-called socialism is not based on the utilisation of the vast production capacity of modern technique. They see in it the cause

of their ruin. Hence they want to return to their own self-sufficing village economy, hand manufactures and small trade. This return to the pre-bourgeois period means a return to the stagnation of feudalism, hence it is reactionary. Such a reversion is impossible. The whole world process of social evolution shows that bourgeois economy subverts feudalism and wherever feudal or primitive economy has been replaced by the capitalist, a return to the previous mode has become impossible. Therefore the cry of "back to the golden age" is of utopian outlook. In Russia also the populists had tried to go back but failed. The section of the Indian petty-bourgeoisie which objectively is revolutionary, in its ideals represents a reactionary utopian tendency. (The problem is treated in Exs. P. 296 & P. 297.) The reactionary utopian programme of this section came to the forefront during the days of Non-Cooperation Movement in 1921. The whole of the economic programme of this school was summed up by the *charkha* and *khaddar*. The most revolutionary battalions roused for the battle of freedom were marshalled under the reactionary outlook of the *charkha*. Vast amount of energy and money was spent on it and perverted form of logic, facts and economics was carefully sown among the millions of workers and peasants. There is perhaps not a single industrial syndicate in the world that has spent so much men and money in advertising its wares.

It need not be told that those who are not specifically reactionary in psychology, those who follow the process of social growth in a normal manner, are opposed to *charkha*. No one can ever doubt the Communists are opposed to it at all times and on all grounds. Yet we find that the thing has seized the minds of thousands of people. In the early days of the *charkha* movement, its supporters still seriously put forward arguments to prove its economic value and also the possibility and necessity of reconstructing our society on the *charkha* basis. But that phase passed away when the revolutionary tide ebbed.

D/- 3.12.31 .

One at least of all the extant notions has been given up—that *khaddar* can compete with mill products. (The refutation of this

notion has been at times made by us through the Kranti ) One or two significant facts about the anti-social character of the *charkha* in relation to the development of the modern productive forces may be noted Mr. Mahadeo Desai says "Working at the rate of three to four spare hours a day it is easy to produce three pound, of 25 s counts of yarn a month," and he puts the value of this at Rs 3/- (Young India, 16th July 1931, page 188) Three to four hours is a very loose figure for basing calculations upon Still it may be taken at three hours for all the 30 days in the month That gives three pounds production of 25s for 90 hours per spindle per head, that is 5.33 ounces for a ten-hour working day This looks an exaggerated figure The results of a competition communicated to Mahatma Gandhi and published by him (Young India, September 3, 1931, page 246) show that out of four competitors the first spun in 24 hours' continued spinning 9,360 yards of 16 6 counts That would give us a weight of 10.74 ounces for 24 hours I will add 15 per cent more efficiency on ten hours' spinning and we get 5 14 ounces of sixteens for a ten-hour day On a ring spindle in a mill, you get more than 7 ounces Output on lower counts must be larger in weight than on higher So either the first figure is exaggerated or the second is a very low record Even if the exaggerated result is taken as true we get the following output and wages on a charkha and a ring spindle for ten-hour working

1	2	3	4		
	Output per spindle for 10 hrs on 25s ounces	Output per spinner for 10 hrs on 25s ounces	Wages per day		
			Rs	As	Ps
On Charkha	5 33	5 33	0	5	4
On one side of ring frame i.e 180 spindles	4 90	408 00	1	1	7

(Note —The result in column 2 on ring frame is arrived at by multiplying 4 90 by 180 spindles per spinner and then distributing it per head at the rate of 24 men per 1,000 spindles )



The spinning wages per pound of yarn on charkha at the above rate come to 192 pies and on the ring frame to 8.3 pies. I have taken the ring frame costs on the Bombay basis. An article in the evidence before the Fawcett Committee in Bombay (vide Exh. D 523, page 223) gives the spinning wages cost of one pound of yarn of  $24\frac{1}{2}$  counts at Ahmedabad at .98 pence, that is 10.45 pies. For simpler understanding, the ratios can be put down thus.

Output per head	Wages per head	Spinning wages cost per lb of yarn
On Charkha 1	1	20
Ring Frame 76	3	1

This table sums up the intensely wasteful nature of charkha production. The productivity per worker on a ring frame is 76 times that of the khaddarite. His wages are three times more but wages cost only 128th. There is not the slightest chance by any means whatever for the charkha product to stand against the mill product. Whether in productivity or the total volume of earnings the charkha is reactionary and wasteful. When human energy and brain have developed productive forces to such an extent that one spinner today is 76 times more productive than the mediaeval one it is sheer waste of precious human lifetime to return to the charkha society.

The same story is revealed in handloom weaving and the same lesson is drawn. The weaving wages per sq. yard in the Gandhi Ashram at Meerut are quoted at 15 pies while in the mill they are 3 to 4 pies only. Though the rate appears to be so tempting in the former, the actual earnings of the Ashram weavers are Rs. 15/- per month on all designs while in the Bombay mills they are Rs. 48/-.

There is one section of the advocates of the charkha who do not want to destroy the development of machine production. They themselves are industrialists and financiers but they support the movement because they say it supplements the low incomes of the peasantry and offers it employment in "idle days". In this garb the

charkha appears as a method of increasing earnings. We look at this question both from the point of view of the ultimate and immediate results, to evaluate which the very premises, from which the good results are claimed by the charkhaites have to be examined. In the first place does the peasant have "idle days"? If he has, has only this work to do or something else, apart from cultivation? If he has any other work, is it preferable for him to take to the charkha as his supplementary industry? If he takes, does he really get the relief himself or somebody else? An examination of the working days spent on cultivation on his allotment and the days during which outside employment is sought, by a number of tenants on certain farms in the Punjab about which accounts are published by the Board of Economic Inquiry, would show that where the allotted area is sufficiently big labour from outside has to be engaged to cope with the work. In such cases and where cultivation yields a living wage there is no incentive for taking to a meagrely paying supplementary work. From this point of view charkha can serve as a source of necessary supplementary income for the holders of uneconomic plots and landless workers only. For this section of the peasantry the number of idle days is not so many as is stated by some. An attempt to work out some scientific data to determine the number of actual idle days has been made by Mr. Harihar Dayal in the book "Fields and Farmers in Oudh" (pages 240 and 242). He considers the normal working day to be of 9 hours and sets up a table of 357 days in the year and the total number of hours of work put in by a landless worker which comes to 1,572 hours. Then he makes the statement that for about six months in the year he has practically no work to do in agriculture. The Royal Commission on agriculture says: "It may be assumed as a generalisation that by far the greater number of cultivators have at least from two to four months' absolute leisure in the year." The Central Banking Inquiry Committee agrees with this view (page 240) and so does the bourgeoisie. In the evidence before the Commission, however, the working day was suggested to be of more than ten hours. In making these computations, nothing has been said about the

necessary number of holidays which a peasant must have as an ordinary human worker. The whole year is not a working year at all. There are ordinary social holidays and festivals. Then you must be allowed rest days every week or a fortnight. Provision must be made for what we call absenteeism in industry, due to sickness and other causes. These three factors alone absorb at least  $2\frac{1}{2}$  months in the year. (Ten per cent in absenteeism days 35, plus 26 rest days fortnightly, plus 10 social religious holidays and festivals = 71 days.) It may be that for certain sections of the peasants the work is very little, but then that is a case of unemployment and not one of an employed peasant standing in need of supplementary income and passing "idle days". However supposing that the peasant has such days on such a large scale the cottage industries or the charkha do not supplement *his* income. In the first place the cottage industries have no chance to survive against machine goods. Secondly their productivity and hence income are very low, absolutely disproportionate to the labour spent. Thirdly whatever is so earned does not supplement the peasant's bread at all. We know that generally the whole of the poor and middle peasantry as also the landless workers are in debt. 70 to 80 per cent of the whole peasantry is in debt. They cannot meet their debts and other charges every year and the burden piles up. For example the Punjab Provincial Banking Inquiry Report shows that the debts of the peasants rose from 90 crores in 1921 to 135 crores in 1929. (Page 56, Central Report.) If a most intensive campaign of supplementing the incomes had produced say ten crores in this period the result would have been that the debts would have mounted up to 125 crores instead of 135. To the vast indebted peasantry the supplementary income from charkha or from any other source means only less percentage of arrears in the payment of interest and rent. If he earns more he does not add to his bread and butter but to the accounts of his creditor. Our final objection is that to lead the peasant into the channel of finding his salvation by more work on a supplementary industry is to hide from him the fact that the real cause of his poverty is the robbery of his labour and not

the want of labour or the means. The bourgeoisie is keen on the propaganda of supplementary cottage work because that reduces the incentive of the peasant to class-struggle and keeps him off from attacking the whole system as such. Thus from immediate as well as ultimate results the programme of charkha reformism is a programme of reaction and of sabotaging the real struggle of the peasantry for a better life.

Amongst the petty-bourgeoisie can also be put the large groups of students who in all the bourgeois revolutions have carried the banner of idealism and who have contributed undaunted heroes to many a battle. But this section in spite of its heroism has no specific class theory or aims or objects. Their ideal is an independent bourgeois republic, but they differ from the Indian bourgeoisie in their programme of action. By their heroism they help the bourgeoisie but being continually pressed by impoverishment into line with the proletariat, many of them succeed in breaking away from their class moorings, accept the Socialist Communist ideals and render valuable services to the working-class and peasant.

### **103. The material conditions of the working-class which force it into class-struggle, economic and political**

The working-class in India is comparatively of a small size being only 3 millions. The largest section is employed in the textiles and railways, which account for half the industrial factory workers: Cotton and Jute together employed 7 lakhs and the Railways 7,76,042 in 1929. The Prosecution in this case point to the fact that we pushed up our trade union activity amongst the workers on the railways, textiles and docks especially. They read into it a sinister motive. But the real reason of the biggest and efficient trade unions being formed first in these branches is the fact that Capitalism and therefore the working-class in almost all countries began their development with these industries—transport and textiles. If an acute and more or less well-organised trade union class-struggle is to be found in this section of the working-class it is but a natural corollary to the way in which

capital develops. Absence of statistics is one of the features of the British Administration in India. Hence it is difficult to determine the exact size of the working-class. It is claimed to consist of 50 million persons, if we include agricultural plantation and domestic workers (Exh. P. 2580). This would in fact include anyone who sells his labour power for wages and produces surplus values for the capitalist class. But if we restrict ourselves to the remarks of Lenin and define the conception "worker" (Exh: P. 2491, page 377 dated 12.4.29) in such a manner that only those come under it who in reality as a result of their position in life had to acquire a proletarian psychology, which however is impossible for one who has not worked for many years in the factory, without any ulterior aims, merely on the basis of the general economic and social conditions of the person in question, the number of such workers in India will not be more than 2 millions.

Indian economists and social reformers have studied the peasant question to some extent, but they have shut out the problems of the working-class from their literature because the peasant liberated by the bourgeoisie helps its growth, but the worker is directly the antithesis of the bourgeoisie. The colonial bourgeoisie becomes a dangerous competitor to the imperialist by reason of the long hours of work and low wages of the colonial worker who is still only a pauperised peasant thrown out of the village. Therefore the intellectuals of the imperialist bourgeoisie as also their trade unions have studied and exposed the conditions of the Indian working-class. (For example the report of Purcell and Hallsworth and such other works.) The Prosecution in this case say that we foment strikes, no matter whether the workers have or have not any grievances. But these reports will show that the Indian worker has to work in such inhuman conditions that for all time there is a permanent fund of grievances justifying a strike. The material conditions of the working-class, on the admission of responsible Commissions, are forcing them into class-struggle. While in capitalist Europe they secured the 8-hour day years ago and in Soviet Russia they are working even a 7-hour day, in India

they have to work for 10 hours and in the native states it extends to 14 hours also. Their right to form a trade union was recognised only five years back. It was only 8 years ago that it was discovered that the limbs and life of a worker have value and that he should be compensated for their loss, if they are lost in creating wealth for the bourgeoisie. Still he has not the right of a full meal, as he has no right to a Minimum Living Wage. He has no right to fall sick and become old and if he does, he must starve and die. In India there is no insurance for him. The Prosecution have painted us as men who foment grievances where there are none. The Indian bourgeoisie says it is overflowing with great love for the brother Indian worker. It is only the foreign oppression that causes all the difficulty. It is a well-known fact that in cotton industries and in other small factories, it is the brotherly Indian bourgeoisie that is dominant. British capital operates on a large scale in jute, tea, and mining. But the Royal Commission on Labour has the same sorry tale to tell about the working conditions in industries whether owned by the patriotic bourgeois or the wicked foreigner. The Prosecution have *ad nauseam* repeated that Communists destroy family life, the sweet pleasures of a home, smiling with children. But the Whitley Commission seems to betray them. Speaking about wool cleaning in the Punjab wherein women and children are employed, they say, "the initial process consists of tearing or beating with the hands and with iron rods lumps of dry mud, coagulated blood and other extraneous matter from the unsorted wool. This is a foul process and as no system of grids to remove the accumulated dust is provided, the air, the person and the ground quickly become covered with dirt and wool fluff. Very young children sleep alongside their mothers on piles of wool, their faces and clothes covered with a fine layer of this germ-laden dust". Speaking about Shellac Factories in Bihar and Orissa and C.P. they quote the report of the Director of Public Health: "Washing pits, reservoirs and drains are not properly cleaned at regular intervals. The same water is used for washing over and over again for a week or more and is allowed to stagnate for a period before it is drained off. Due to purification of all the

animal refuse from the sticklac along with myriads of crushed insects in this water, the stinking effluvia from the washing basins and drains are disgusting. But the persons employed on washing have to stand knee-deep in this water in the pits and carry on work for hours together." Children of 12 and 10 are employed in the melting room where even adult workers get exhausted due to excessive heat. In the 'Bidi' factories in the Madras Presidency (those selfsame 'bidis' which the patriotic bourgeois tells us to smoke in place of the foreign cigarettes), corporal punishments and other disciplinary measures of a reprehensible kind are sometimes resorted to in the case of the smaller children. Workers as young as 5 years of age may be found in some of these places working without adequate meal intervals or weekly rest days and often for 10 or 12 hours daily for sums as low as 2 annas in the case of those of tenderest years. (Pages 95-96.) In the Amritsar Carpet Factories, "that national indigenous industry," the labour of young children is contracted out for years for a loan of money, that is in plain words children are sold to the moneylending manufacturers for a loan to the needy parents. In the mines 90 per cent of the workers are life-long victims of the hook-worm, and the percentage of infection of hook-worm is a reliable guide to the degree of sanitary control. (Page 115.) In the Khewra Salt Mines owned by the Government of India: "We were struck by the poor health of the miners and their families. Anaemia is prevalent and it appears from a report made by Colonel Gill, Director of Public Health in the Punjab in 1922, that neither hook-worm nor malaria is responsible. Colonel Gill also pointed out defects in diet and complete absence of sanitary arrangements". This was in 1922. Eight years later, when the Government of India were telling this Court that the wicked Communists foment strikes even if there are no grievances, the Royal Commission notes the tremendous progress of the Government of India thus: "At the time of our visit conditions seemed to be much as his report (Colonel Gill's report of 1922) presented them and we have been unable to find that any action had been taken" (Page 109). If the Government is making lakhs of rupees over the mines and the

workers suffer from anaemia, are the Communists wrong when they call the Government the "blood-suckers' Dictatorship," in this case, not metaphorically, but literally? Evidence has been led regarding an oil strike in Bombay in the Government Oil Company. While denouncing the strike, they took to themselves the credit of safeguarding the interests of workers. The Royal Commission speaking about the Burma Oil Company (whose workers were involved in the Bombay strike) say: "Of the 17,000 workers employed by this company on the actual oil fields, about 12 per cent are subject to the Factories Act, but the bulk of their workers and of those employed by other companies are subject to no statutory control in the matter of hours and health and to few statutory regulations in respect of safety.....In Burma, there is an Oil Fields Act which is directed to the preservation of the oil sands.....but is not designed for the protection of labour' (Page 112). Let not the Prosecution mistake the sarcasm of His Majesty's Commissioners for that of a Communist manifesto.

The imperialist capitalist order in India, in the present epoch of the decline of world Capitalism, cannot dupe the people into believing that it can give good wages, employ increasing numbers, and provide better life for them. Hence both the Indian bourgeoisie and Imperialism admit that standards of living wages, hours etc. have to be worsened. But they hold forth the hope that once the critical period is over the workers can agitate and demand better standards. The struggle of the world's working-class shown so far does not justify such a hope. The class conscious proletarian vanguard of the industrial countries is definitely convinced that a socialist society alone is their salvation, though sections of the proletariat may differ as to the method of bringing it about. But in India even the ideal of a socialist society is being attacked. The Indian bourgeoisie and the Government want the working-class here to strictly limit itself to seeking reforms within the capitalist structure and not to seek to replace it by a socialist structure. They do not want the working-class to raise the question of political power, and some of the accused in this case, who call themselves workers agree with the



bourgeoisie and the Government that the workers should not care to see whether MacDonal, Baldwin or Gandhi rules over them. The workers are told that they should mainly concern themselves with their bread, with their wages and working conditions. Even if you start from this premise and Communism also starts exactly from a similar premise (that is the problem of maintenance and development of society by extraction of useful things from nature with the aid of improved technology and the proper distribution of these things to the members of the society)—the question of political power of class rule is forced on the workers in the struggle for bread and better life. For example in the matter of legislation affecting them, the working-class is at once confronted with the problem of class rule. Factory legislation in India began in 1881, but every law so far passed has had to be forced from the unwilling hands of the Imperialist State and the Indian bourgeoisie. Though some amount of legislation does exist, it does not mean that it is obeyed and given effect to by the employers. Vast areas and big companies employing large masses of workers are exempted from the application of the laws and the fact is mentioned by the Royal Commission in several places. If the working-class wants to improve its condition without seizing political power but by legislation it has to express its grievances by strikes, without which the bourgeoisie and Government refuse even to consider their complaints. But strikes are controlled, attacked, suppressed and broken by the violence of the State, its police and military. That again forces on the workers' attention the question of political power. In fact wages, hours, the very existence of the worker is closely bound up with politics—because it is the State that fortifies the social relations in which he is to remain a worker and produce wealth for the bourgeoisie. How the Indian workers are inevitably moved towards this question of class-power by the experience of their daily struggle will be illustrated when I will deal with my Trade Union work in Bombay and other places?

It has been shown so far that contrary to the statements of our Prosecutors and critics there exist in Indian society classes, class-

contradictions and class-conflicts, and that all these are embedded in the economy of our society and fortified by the political power. That we do not arbitrarily divide society because Marx or Lenin said so. Even if you scrap out all that has been said or written by Marx, Lenin or the Comintern, the Indian bourgeoisie have to get rid of Imperialism and the workers and peasants have to abolish feudalism and Capitalism. The constitutional struggle avails no class except the big bourgeoisie. So the national and class-struggle gather strength on a mass scale throughout the country.

#### **104. Inciting class war—models of class war and other questions**

Granting that such conditions do exist, is it necessary and good to aggravate the situation by inciting class war instead of trying to heal the cracks by class peace? Historical experience shows that by class war alone, by its dialectical development does society progress. If the worn out class, that is the worn out economy and all its superstructure, are not removed, the society will be stifled. Class war is a necessity for the rebirth in a healthier form.

Is it necessary that the forms of our class-struggle should be modelled after that of the Russian or western experiences? Our warring classes have the same content and form, have the same actions and reactions as the classes in other countries. Our capitalists and workers have the same form, the same social actions and reactions as those of other countries. The only difference would lie in the degrees of development. Therefore, the general form or method of our class-struggle will be the same as in other countries. England has not to fight for National Independence but we have to. Therefore our class-struggle will have to take account of this fact. France has no feudal class, but we have, just as Russia had. So our class-struggle will be composed of a national movement for Independence in which we have to join hands with the revolutionary sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, though they hold the ideals of Capitalism, against

Imperialism. Our revolution will not be at once socialist revolution as it will be in Germany or in England. Hence our forms of struggle will be modelled after the experience of all the countries and not particularly this one or that. But the Russian experience is especially emphasised, because it is there that the struggle has reached a more or less successful stage in the rebuilding of a new and better society.

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Is it necessary that the Indian workers must build up a Communist Party? In the first place in the modern epoch where the class differentiation of society has taken a very clear form, every class has a party of its own. The big bourgeoisie in India has the Liberal Federation. The petty-bourgeoisie of traders, artisans and rich peasants are organised in the Congress, which stands avowedly for class peace and the retention of the existing property relations. All these class parties and organisations further their own class interest, but the working-class has no party of its own. If the workers must contend a class-struggle, they must have their own class party. A class party of the workers with a revolutionary programme against Capitalism and Imperialism can only be a Communist Party.

Is it absolutely necessary that all the Communist Parties of the world should unite internationally and that such a union in the present period is represented by the Third Communist International? The modern bourgeoisie has broken down national boundaries and built up a world economy and world society, separate parts of which cannot function, without affecting the other parts. International actions in all phases of life are now so common that the question would appear superfluous. The bourgeoisie of the world unites internationally whenever any section of it is challenged by the working-class, which also then has to cooperate on an international scale to guard its interests. Hence the Communist Parties of the world unite internationally. Such a union has been formed three times since 1864, each time conforming to and produced by the needs of the times.

**105. "Outside connection" the unnecessary part of the indictment**

I have stated so far in brief outlines some of the principles of Marxism-Leninism which I am convinced will save society from destruction and will carry it on to a better stage. Leninism alone can give freedom to India, can give freedom to the masses. The late Mr. Langford James while explaining his case said: "By their creed, by their convictions, by their constitution itself they are inexorably bound to work intensively and unceasingly for the overthrow of the British monarchy in England, in India and in the dominions". In another place referring to our advocacy of the Soviet system he says, "if you find these people saying that, and if you find them working to do that, then indeed it is not possible in the nature of things that they should do anything else than plotting, planning and conspiring to smash His Majesty's Government to pieces". The first extract states what I am bound to do "intensively and unceasingly" and the second asserts that I did what I was bound to do, i.e. "plotting, and planning and conspiring." It is then claimed that I am guilty of the charge and should be convicted. Thus the offence is clearly stated to consist of two parts, one the holding of Communist principles and second acting up to those principles.

There seems to be some difference of opinion between our Prosecutors and the Court as to what exactly is the most important thing in the second part of the alleged offence. A considerable indication of the opinion of this Court is available in its bail order of 7th May, 1931. Referring to the point as to what constitutes, "the seriousness of the conspiracy, the order observes," what the summary (i.e. the Committal Order), however, does bring out is what is one of the most important points in the Prosecution Case, namely the allegation that the conspiracy with which the accused or the applicants are charged is not one which is limited to India . . . and therefore of a much more serious nature." And later on "it is from this outside connection that the seriousness of the case to a considerable extent arises". (Pages 11 and 12). The questions framed by the Court also begin with "what may be described as foreign correspondence." In contrast to this I may

quote Mr. Langford James. After explaining to the Court all that he could or understood about Leninism and the Comintern, he told what was necessary to convict us of the offence under this section. "It is quite unnecessary to show that they were in fact members of a Communist Party definitely formed and affiliated to the Third International. I think you will come to the conclusion that they were such a party and if not actually affiliated they were about to affiliate to the Third International. But I repeat that it is quite an unnecessary part of the indictment." And in the same paragraph for the third time he said: "I do not want to be understood to say that I cannot link up these people with the Third International. I think and in fact I am quite sure that I can, but the point is that it is not really necessary, strictly necessary to do so." Thus according to the original brain that "could link up these people with the Third International" and conceived the conspiracy of this Conspiracy Case, "the outside connection" is not really necessary. It is quite an unnecessary part of the indictment, while for this Court it gives seriousness to that case to a considerable extent. It has been our experience that the opinion of the Prosecution holds good in this Court and I believe that Mr. James knew the mind of his Imperialism better. Imperialism is not concerned whether we had or had not foreign connection or affiliation with the C.I. It wants to suppress the revolutionary proletariat and peasantry in India and the holding of principles of Communism. They do not want anyone to subscribe to any revolutionary system of thought. So it can be stated that the questions and answers about foreign correspondence, the Communist Party etc. are 'really unnecessary'; 'quite an unnecessary part of the indictment' and hence of the defence also. According to Mr. James "incomparably the most important of our activities, that which was taking the most of our time and attention, were the strikes which raged in Calcutta and Bombay." So I will now turn to this incomparably the most important of our activities and if by that time the Court still would disagree with Mr. James and think that outside connection and explanation about it are "really necessary" I will try to reply.

**Q.** The following is (E. and O.E.) the rest of the evidence against you grouped under its main heads:—

- I. W.P.P. of Bombay—P. 1373 (6), 2137 P, 230, 1015, 1358, 2311, 1685, 1375 Kranti of 3. 9.27; 835, 1348 (41), 993, 1353, 1343, 1348 (16) (18) (19) (15) (24) (14) (7), 1373 (14), 1348 (2), 1624, 1373 (13), 984, 981, 1492, 930 Kranti of 30.6.28, 986 Kranti of 5.7.28, 23.8.28 and 30.8.28, 930 Kranti of 12.7.28 and 2.8.28, 1602, 1344, 1365, P.W.'s 244 and 245, P. 2242, P.1690, 1261, 1207 (4), (3), 1170, and 431 Krantikari of 28.1.29, 1211, 1002D, 1207 (5), Kranti 9.8.28, 23.8.28, 20.8.28, 2.9.28, 20.9.28, 27.9.28, 5.10.28, 13.1.29, 3.3.29 and 17.3.29 (to be found in different Kranti exhibits numbers.) P. 987, 988, 1205, 990, 983.
- II. W.P.P. of Bengal etc.:—Bengal: P. 52, 526 (41), 1615 and 1855. U.P.:—P. 1619, 1621 P, 311 and 433, 526 (6)  
Punjab:—P. 526 (24), 1408, 1409, 1393, 1608, 2051 C, 1626, 1641 and P.W. 179.
- III. A.I.W.P.P.:—P. 1373 (2), 1613, 2024C, 1348(22), 1373 (3), 1323, 1617, 1373 (5), 1654P, 1611P, 1797P, 1348 (35), 468 (2), 978, 977 and 669.
- IV. A.I.T.U.C.:—P.W. 119, P. 10, 1965, 1966, 1967, 2138P, 2141C, 1878C, 1863P, 545(1), 1614, 1848C, 479, 526 (34), 545 (3), 545 (8), 999, 1206 (1), and P.W. 123.
- V. T.U.s. and strikes:—P. 819, 1625, P.Ws. 273, 276, 278 and 245, P. 958, 944, 966, 967, 929, 985, 959, 949, 787, 786, 790, 792, 954, 1628P, 395 (2), (1), 396, 955 (1), 964, and 986 Kranti of 12.8.28.
- VI. Connections and Miscellaneous:—P.Ws. 244 and 218, P. 1972, 1973, 1966, 2067 (1), P. 1637, 995, 996, 1639, 2022C, 957, 146, 525 (1), 645, 980, 991, 997, 1000, 1001, 1220, 1003, 1299, 1819, 1822, 1885, 2213, 1207(2), (6), 1208 (2), 1796 (e), 2512, 975 and 1175.

**Have you anything to say in explanation of this evidence?**

## **PART III**

### **WHAT I HAVE DONE**

#### **SECTION 1—Development of Textile Capital and Strikes up to April 1928: paras 106-109**

##### **106. The growth of the Bombay textile bourgeoisie—its profits which were the bases of the Bombay strikes**

The General Strike of 1928 in the textile mills of Bombay would have happened all the same even if the accused in this case who are charged with responsibility for that strike had not taken part in the events of that strike. It would have been as much prolonged and as much stubbornly fought, and it shows a complete lack of understanding of the forces that had brought about and kept on the strike, when it is said that the prolonged nature and stubbornness of the fight were exclusively or in a large measure due to the Workers' and Peasants' Party and the Communists who devoted their energies to it. The strike was an inevitable outcome of the objective conditions existing in the industry at the time and the series of historical developments that had taken place in previous years in the textile industry of Bombay in particular and generally of the whole world. My part in that struggle was to put whatever energy and capacities I had at the disposal of the working-class and on the basis of the fighting capacity of that class to lead it on to victory.

The growth of the textile industry in Bombay and India illustrates one of the internal class contradictions of Capitalism. It is a well-known fact that before the advent of the British in India the cloth requirements of the people were met by indigenous production, which was carried on in scattered village units. That scattered and slow method of production was interrupted by the British conquest of India. The foreign merchant possessing political power used it to forcibly destroy the weavers' guilds wherever it could. The place of Indian goods was being given to the products of Lancashire mills, though it is a fact that this forcible destruction in some places of Indian textile manufactures

was one of the methods employed to kill Indian trade, it is insufficient, as has been already shown, to explain the complete capture of the vast village markets by foreign textile goods. The main cause was the cheapness and superiority of machine-made textiles over handicraft products and the advantages of a vast co-ordinated organisation of the new bourgeoisie. The work of destruction first begun by force was completed by the superiority of machine manufacture. The Indian textile market was completely captured and fed by the British textile manufactures. Once having captured it, it was in the nature of things for Lancashire to hold on to the market and not allow it to be recaptured by any other agency. But the internal class contradiction of Capitalism itself created the competing agency. If it was British capital in textiles that destroyed our textile manufactures in order to live on profits from exports of India, it was again British Capitalism in heavy industries, in machine manufacture, that supplied the machinery to build up the textile industry in India and thus to destroy exports of British textiles.

Before 1870 Capitalism in England was consolidating itself and exporting mainly consumption goods to foreign countries. But side by side with this, one branch of Capitalism was developing machine manufacture. After the necessities of the expanding home industries were met where was the surplus of products in machine-building plants to go? After supplying power-looms and spindles to the continent, the balance had naturally to be exported to some other countries. After 1870, Capitalism in England and the continent had to change its character. Instead of exporting readymade consumption goods it began to export the very machinery that made these goods. The birth of syndicates and combines, the hunt for colonies, the export of iron and steel material began in this period. The quest for profits is the only motive for capitalist production. So while the Lancashire textile owner was interested in the export of ready-made cloth from his mills and opposed to the growth of mills in other countries, his neighbour who manufactured looms and spindles must also dispose of his goods. Since his brother capitalist had enough of them he had to export those spindles and looms to those markets



where his brother capitalist was selling ready-made cloth. It was Lancashire which exported cloth to India, it was Birmingham which exported textile machinery. On a certain amount of capital being available for investment, the Indian capitalist started his own mills and British and Indian cloth began to contest for the market. The first mill in India was built with British machinery in 1851.

It is not that the Birmingham manufacturer of machinery was a less patriotic Englishman than the Lancashire fellow. It is not that he did not see that the machinery he was exporting would ultimately compete with the other patriotic Englishman next door in Lancashire. He saw it, but it was the law of Capitalism that was governing him, the law of profits, not the law of patriotism. If he did not export machinery he would have to close down and go to the wall, or find market for his looms even if that market were ultimately to fight his another patriotic brother. He chose the latter as every bourgeois would do and does. Here was the biggest class contradiction running to the help of India and in fact of every dependent colony. Both sections of British Capitalism were united in holding India as a market. But the interests of the two sections in relation to each other were in the last instance contradictory to each other. But as they did not conflict immediately both pursued their own course without friction. The result was: starting in 1851 the textile mills had risen to 51 in 1877 with over 12 lacs of spindles and 10,000 looms.

For a time this was allowed to go on imperceptibly. The slave Capitalism of India began to build up the textile industry of its own. In England the bourgeoisie in political power had changed its colour. The relatively peacefully inclined sections of the British bourgeoisie who were fed on the exports of consumption goods were ousted from power which was henceforth seized by heavy industry, which stood for colonies, militarism and wars for the parcelling out of the world. The interests of textile capital of the Liberal bourgeoisie, not being dominant, the rise of textile industry in India was not much troubled till 1896. In the meanwhile the 12 lacs of spindles had grown up to 38 lacs and the 10,000 looms to 35,000.

The Indian mills that were being built were mostly producing yarn that was consumed by the Indian handloom weavers and exported to China and the East Coast of Africa where the Indian merchants were migrating. Though it is a fact that the internal class contradictions of Capitalism allowed the Indian capitalist to buy machinery from British firms, yet the British bourgeoisie did not intend to allow the Indian bourgeoisie to completely oust the British textiles from the Indian markets. So long as they were merely producing yarn on a small scale it did not much matter, but when the looms began to be installed it was serious business. A continually growing 200 per cent increase in spindles and looms within 20 years, in a subject colonial country was threatening. The appeals of textile capital to the ruling heavy industry interests, the appeals of the Liberal bourgeoisie to the Conservative ironclads were successful. Once again national Capitalism for a time bridged over its internal conflict and an excise duty of 3½ per cent on Indian manufacturers was levied in 1896.

The imperialist bourgeoisie preaches to the school boys that politics should not be used for the purposes of commercial gains. The excise duty is the standing answer exposing the lie of that lesson. The political power, the State, exists to fortify the economical gains of that bourgeoisie which controls that State. The repeal of the excise duty became henceforth a standing demand of the Indian bourgeoisie and was made by it a part of the struggle for national freedom.

In spite of this the industry prospered. It was mainly due to the long hours of work and the low wages paid to the Indian workers by the Indian bourgeoisie. The English spinner working 10 hours a day in a good cold climate was getting 25 shillings or Rs. 13/- a week while the Indian worker working 14 hours a day got 4 shillings or Rs. 2/- a week in 1890.

The Swadeshi agitation of 1905, the first organised outburst of the rising bourgeois nationalism in India gave an impetus to the industry. The jump was remarkable not so much on the side of spinning as weaving. The spindle strength of 51 lacs and 50,000 looms in 1905 rose to 62 lacs spindles and 82,000 looms, an increase of 20 and 40 per cent respectively, by 1910. In spite of the excise duty for which the Indian bourgeoisie paid

Rs. 3,31,00,000 from 1896 to 1910, the industry was prospering and its huge profits were drawing more and more capital into it. On the eve of the imperialist war, the spindles and looms had risen to 68 lacs and 108,000 representing an increase of 10 and 30 per cent respectively. (1915). The effect on production was also surprising. While in 1900 imports of foreign cloth were 2191 million yards, the Indian output was 102 milyds only. According to bourgeois nationalism, if the ratio of foreign imports to Swadeshi cloth is to determine our love of the country, the Indian people were so ungrateful to the Indian bourgeoisie, and so much attached to saving money by the purchase of low priced foreign goods that the Indian tincture of patriotism was only 4 per cent strong. But the Indian bourgeoisie was sparing no pains to raise that strength. By 1914 the Indian production against imports of 3197 milyds was 1164 milyds. In the total demand the Indian strength had arisen to 27 per cent.

When thus bourgeois patriotism was on the rise, and the textile industry making millions and attracting more and more capital to it, the working-class was ruthlessly exploited and over worked. There is not much data available on the conditions of the work and wages before the war period. The period before the war was one of wholesale expropriation of the workers. There was no limit to hours of work, no weekly holiday, no effective Factory Act. When the Government, of course in the interests of the British bourgeoisie, proposed a Factory Act in 1881, it was opposed. The Acts of 1881 and 1891 remained dead letters. The peasantry in the villages was terrorised by the Government forces and the zamindars, its economic power sapped by the confiscatory rents, famines and taxation. Impoverished, a section of it went to the towns, to the textile mills and railways. There it carried with it the terror-stricken mind of its village and the despair born of defeat. It had no strength to fight for human conditions of work and treatment. But, as the Communists say, Capitalism is its own grave digger. It creates its own contradiction. If with the rise of the industry, textile Capitalism was becoming stronger so was the working-class. The outbreak of the imperialist war gave an impetus to the seeds of class consciousness of the working-class to blossom forth. The key to the 1928 struggle of the working-

class of Bombay and other places lies in the war period developments of the bourgeoisie and the working-class.

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The outbreak of the war gave the Indian bourgeoisie a free field to develop to the extent it could. But the weakness of the bourgeoisie prevented it from taking advantage of the opportunity, and on account of the absence of any industrial country other than England capable of supplying machinery to the Indian bourgeoisie, the expansion could not take place. It could only exploit the existing plants. In the textiles no increase in the installation of new plants took place, but export from England having fallen the Indian production increased. Foreign cloth in ports into India came down from 3197 milyds in 1913 to 1081 in 1919, and the Indian production with practically the same spindle strength rose from 1164 milyds to 1640 in 1919. Our mill share had gone up from 27 per cent to 40 per cent of the total mill supply.

The Indian bourgeoisie during imperialist war refused to strike politically, but followed very quickly the slogan of "Rob while others war." Reliable data are again lacking regarding the profits made by the textile magnates in the war period. But not even the bourgeois historians now dare to contradict the assertion that profits were fabulous. Though the rate of dividends declared can give a certain idea of the profits, it is not adequate. The capitalist methods of accounting and presenting of balance-sheet have a hundred and one ways of concealing the real magnitude of the surplus robbed from the workers. Excessive depreciation, reserve funds of several kinds, converting reserves into bonus shares are some of the methods by which the working-class, peasantry and the small section of the petty-bourgeoisie who are allowed to hold a few shares by the monopolists are given a false idea about the surplus value extracted from the workers. The visible profits according to the balance-sheets of the Bombay companies were:

1917	302 lacs	1920	1010 lacs
1918	228 ..	1921	846 ..
1919	615 ..	1922	387 ..

According to Mr. J.A. Wadia visible profits were 52 crores net between 1914 and 1920. The reserves of the industry in Bombay mounted up from 2.36 crores in 1917 to 12.44 crores in 1921 and the block valuation from 17.98 crores to 42.94 crores in 1922. This is the picture of the Bombay magnates. Those in other industries fared even better. The jute industry paid in dividends 400 per cent and over annually. When the Indian bourgeoisie was thus making huge profits, just as their brothers in England and Germany were making millions from the war boom while their workers and peasants were cutting each other's throats for the interest of their "fatherland" i.e. their bourgeoisie, the industrial worker in the towns could not get a rise in wages even though prices were rising. The peasant in the villages was being oppressed by the war loan and the taxes, even when famine was at the door and influenza was carrying away 6 million people in 1917-18.

**107. No rise in wages though prices and profits rose and real wages fell—the resulting strikes and increase of wages**

It is said that the strike should be the last weapon of the working-class. We are told that Capitalism, when prospering, is ever willing to pay higher wages and so when it is in depression the working-class should suffer wage-cuts for the sake of the industry. This is a lie circulated by the bourgeoisie. Capitalism has never yielded a single pie or a right to the workers until it was fought for. The capitalists are never willing to give an increase and are ever ready to rob the workers. This trait of Capitalism, common all the world over, was responsible for everything that happened in 1928. The bitterness of 1928, the hatred of Capitalism was not new; it was there already. It never was expressed in any literature, because the Bombay working-class till that time had not found spokesmen who could speak out its thoughts, its own needs and ambitions. Communists express and emphasise, while others try to gloss over and hide the existing class-struggle and class relations. Capitalism, the owner of the means of production, ever wants to increase the surplus

value produced by the working-class. It is waging every minute a continuous class war on the worker. The worker in order to live, to survive, has to resist, which he does very slowly and many a time reluctantly. The war had increased the prices of commodities and the price level in India with 1914 at 100 was soaring up thus:

LEVEL OF PRICES, 1914=100

1915	110	lacs	1919	195	lacs
1916	130	„	1920	200	„
1917	145	„	1921	180	„
1918	175	„			

Were not the mill-owners aware of this? Certainly they were. The most sensitive organisation of the stock exchange was every-day showing a rise in the commodities market, whose reflection it is. Did the mill-owners come forth offering a rise of wages to the workers? Did they not see that the real wages of the workers would depreciate severely when the prices were soaring? The mill-owners saw it and waited to see if the workers would take sound steps to express their grievances. From 1914 to 1916 for three years the workers somehow pulled on. Indebtedness increased but when the tide could not be stemmed, strikes began with the modest demand of 10 per cent increase in wages. The strikes broke out one by one in individual mills and it was the first attempt to strike for wages. The wave spread to all workshops and factories in Bombay in 1917 and the increases were given. It may be pointed out that the increase was not given so that the workers might live happily but that they may not stop production which the owners could not afford in times of high profits. With the price level at 145 the 10 per cent could not satisfy anybody; and when the price level went up to 175 in 1918 the workers had to strike against and got only 15 per cent increase i.e., 1/5th of the rise in prices. The mill-owners went on resisting the demands and January 1919 saw again a complete General Strike in the textile mills in Bombay lasting for 15 days. It secured an increase of 20 per cent. The third and last of the successful General Strikes to secure a rise in wages took place in 1920.

The changes in wages and price level in Bombay in this period are given below:—

*Increases in textile wages and prices levels in Bombay*

	1914	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921
Price						
Levels	100	145	175	195	200	200
Wages	100	110	115	135	{ 155 Time { 175 Piece	170 Time 180 Piece
Textile General Strikes			Series of Strikes		General	General
Lasting No. of days					11	15
						30

This will show that the wages of the workers never caught up the rising prices or the cost of living index as compiled by the Government agency. The treatment which Capitalism meted out to the workers in Bombay during this period was sufficient to plant in them a lasting hatred of Capitalism. Taking advantage of the monopoly over the grain market the prices were pushed up so high that the grain merchants and ultimately the imperialist government machinery had to step in and establish control prices in order to prevent food riots. The land owners continued to raise the rents until the petty-bourgeois middle-class, which today is so patriotically supporting the big bourgeoisie in its protective tariff and boycott campaigns, had to clamour for some control over the rapacious bourgeoisie by means of a Rent Act. During this period of 1914-22 when the Bombay textile profiteers made 52 crores of visible profits, the workers had to make five strikes to secure an increase in wages which never pulled them up to the level of the rising cost of living. What must have the workers done to fill up the deficiency each year, each month. Either they must have starved themselves more than what they were already doing before 1914, or gone into debts. The deficit between cost of living and wages (granting for a moment that both coincided in 1914 at 100 which is not a fact) in the case of Bombay weavers alone comes to ten crores of rupees between 1914 and 1920 according to

my calculation which I had submitted to the Fawcett Inquiry Committee (D 523). This was a clean gift to Capitalism by the weavers from their own necessary minimum, apart from the ordinary surplus values produced by them as on the pre-war level. In face of such a robbery of the working-class, who has the impudence to say that the class war is artificially created by the Communists or that we preach class hatred whereas without us the working-class would simply overflow with love for the vampire Capitalism. It must require an amazing ignorance or slavishness for a man to preach to the workers in Bombay to love the bourgeoisie or assist it. The workers can never forget the miseries heaped upon them in the war days and continued even today. While the textile magnates rearing up palaces for themselves, 60 per cent of the population in Bombay was confined within a filthy area of 1/5th of the whole city. In small one-room tenements the workers' families were closed as in the box and compelled to live like beasts: In the report of the lady doctor appointed by the Government of Bombay to investigate conditions of women industrial workers in Bombay in 1922 we find the following appalling state of housing:

"In the outside *chawls* I have several times verified the overcrowding of rooms. In one, on the second floor of a chawl, measuring some 15 by 12 feet I found six families living. Six separate ovens on the floor proved this statement. On enquiry I ascertained that the actual number of adults and children living in this room was 30..... When I questioned the District nurse who accompanied me as to how they would arrange for privacy in this room, I was shown a small place some 3 feet by 4 feet which was usually screened off for the purpose. The atmosphere at night of that room filled with smoke from six ovens and other impurities might handicap any woman or infant both before and after delivery. This was one of many such rooms I saw." (D 548, page 28). In such one room tenements 97 per cent of the workers have to live and as a result 600 children out of 1000 births die off—that is the family life permitted to the worker by Capitalism.

It was during these four years 1917-21, that the working-class in Bombay as also in other places learnt that its life is influenced



by international factors, that somewhere on this globe when the people at the instigation of imperialists fought wars they influenced its living in Bombay, threw it into debts and forced it into strikes. The imperialist war taught the working-class and peasantry in India that the splendid isolation of feudal India is broken up, that its economy is now influenced by international factors. The reluctance of the bourgeoisie to increase wages voluntarily and the readiness with which they gave increases in order to guard their profits, when strikes were forced on them, made the working-class conscious of its power, and taught the workers that strike is not the *last* weapon, but the only effective weapon in their hands to save themselves from starvation. The lesson of active class war was learnt, though in very indistinct lines and through elemental outburst of demands, during "this period. We simply summarised this experience of the workers and held it before them in a clearly formulated manner.

The bitterness of class war increased after 1921. With the termination of the imperialist war the available stocks of goods, so long held back, were thrown on the export market by Europe in order to meet the immediate demands of the war burdens. The sterling exchange having deteriorated and relatively the rupee having risen imports into India became easier. To this were added the feverish schemes of the bourgeoisie for expansion, as it was boom period. The mill-owning rings inflated the capital by recapitalising some plants at high prices by the simple method of book entries and change of the names of the companies. A large part of the sudden jump of textile capital from 9.40 crores in 1919 to 16.98 crores in 1920 is due to this trickery of finance. This was later on used to spread exaggerated ideas about the losses of the industry and was one of the causes of the prolongation of the General Strike of 1928. (D 401).

#### **108. The depression in industry and attack on wages—the strikes of 1924 and 1925**

However here again as in 1907 nationalism came to the help. A severe boycott campaign checked recovery of Lancashire imports

though only for a time. Indian production kept on rising and the mill-owners did not create much trouble in the matter of wages. From 1920 to 1923 there was no serious stoppage of work in Bombay. Foreign imports of 1510 milyds in 1920-21 as against the Indian production of 1581 milyds fell to 1090 milyds (a drop of 33 per cent) as against a rise of Indian production to 1734 milyds. What advantage did the Indian bourgeoisie take of this? It engaged itself in stock exchange speculation and when prices fell, unloaded stocks on the gullible petty-bourgeois investors. With the gradual fall in prices, with the exchange troubles created by a foreign Government which was out to restore the credit of the British exchange, and the inexperience and grab of the speculators in the industry, the visible profits came down from 10.10 crores in 1920 to 8.46 in 1921 and 3.87 crores in 1922. As is always the case under Capitalism the first made to suffer from this were the workers. The mill-owners stopped their bonus that was being paid to them since 1919. When the workers were informed by a sudden notice that they would not get bonus payments, there was a General Strike of the mills beginning on 17th January, 1924.

The strike lasted for two months. There was uptill now no organisation of the workers to lead the strike. The spontaneous lead of the conscious elements of the workers and their unconscious and unorganised solidarity was able to keep up the strike. The bonus question was not a small question. The real loss to the workers from the loss of bonus is not grasped because the loss is not so evident as it is in wage cuts. But the stoppage of bonus was virtually a wage cut. The annual bonus, according to the Bombay Labour Office had added 8.3 per cent to the earnings of the workers in 1921 and therefore its stoppage meant an as much wage cut. (D 548).

The mill-owners took the attitude that the bonus was merely a present from them to the workers who had no "customary, legal or equitable claim" on it. The workers took the stand that the plea of the mill-owners that their profits were in danger was false and their balance-sheets faked. Moreover the mill-owners had never given a wage increase commensurate with the increase of the cost of living and the two ends had never met. After over a month's

struggle the workers refused to give in. Attempts were made to get the strike called off on the promise of an Arbitration Committee to decide the dispute, but the workers refused. It is said that the Communists in 1928 preached to the workers an uncompromising attitude on the question of arbitration and by refusing to accept arbitration or reference of the whole dispute to an Inquiry Committee including the terms of settlement, prolonged the strike and used it for their revolutionary conspiracy purposes. But then what about 1924? There at that time there was no Communist in the strike. Still the workers refused arbitration and also refused to call off the strike on the simple condition of referring the dispute to Inquiry Committee. The mill-owners even resorted to starve out the workers by holding back the payment of due wages. But the workers did not break down. On February 19, 1924, the Government of Bombay appointed an Inquiry Committee presided over by a High Court Judge. While the committee was sitting, the workers held a meeting where the workers and police clashed and a firing took place on March 7. In it 5 were killed, 4 wounded and 13 arrested. On the same day the Governor of Bombay realising the situation, asked the mill-owners to pay off the workers wages which had been held back. The Inquiry Committee declared its verdict on March 11, and rejected the workers' claim. The strike collapsed through exhaustion and the work was resumed by 25th March, 1924 after a struggle of 7¼ million working days. The fight was lost. If the average annual wages is taken at 6 crores, the mill-owners had saved nearly 50 lakhs a year by the abolition of bonus.

At the same time the workers in Bombay learnt some lessons from the actual struggle they had to wage. In this class-struggle, the workers were starved, fire opened on them, their wages withheld; and finally had come a committee which claimed to be impartial, which claimed that it had no class affiliation. That Committee in the face of the visible profits of the industry, the swelling block accounts had declared that the workers need not get bonus. It was the biggest service that Imperialism did to the workers in Bombay. It had associated a high functionary of bourgeois justice with an acute manifestation of class-struggle

and through this functionary declared half a crore of the workers' earnings forfeited thus showing bourgeois justice to be against the workers. It was but natural that the workers in Bombay should lose faith in Inquiry or Arbitration Committees in the High Courts of Imperialism. The workers learnt in 1924 from real objective conditions that he who is not with them is against them. In the class-struggle there are no neutrals. So when we in 1928 expressed our disbelief in Arbitration or Inquiry Committees and rejected proposals of submitting the fate of the strike to another class court of Imperialism and the bourgeoisie, we were simply repeating their own lesson which the workers had learnt in 1924. Not only that. We being young and ignorant of all the happenings of 1924, were in fact warned by the older workers against such committees and we ourselves were given lessons in the past struggle by the class conscious and older workers. The most class conscious and experienced workers are generally better teachers of the class-struggle than many a petty-bourgeois intellectual bookworm.

The second lesson they had learnt was that in times of huge profits the workers were not the first but the last to get even a meagre increase, and that in times of even a small fall in profits they were not the last but the first to be hit. As the industrial crises of the bourgeoisie continually recur and have become chronic after the war, the workers have always to wage an offensive or defensive struggle to snatch better conditions and prevent the worsening of the existing conditions. Thus at all times they have to engage themselves in a continuous class-struggle and in this class-struggle the Imperialist State will always side with the bourgeoisie as against the workers.

After having inflicted a loss of 50 lakhs a year on the workers the mill-owners got emboldened and made another attack on the workers' wages in 1925 September by announcing a wage cut of 11½ per cent that is a cut of 70 to 80 lakhs a year in the earnings of the textile workers in Bombay. The strike began on 15th September 1925 and extended to all the mills, lasting till December, a fight of 11 million working days—3¼ million more than the previous one. This strike and the next one of 1928

illustrated the cowardly nature and the inability of the Indian bourgeoisie to fight its own battle, the battle of freedom to develop the productive forces of the country, which would yield them their profits. The mill-owners in Bombay made the abolition of the Excise Duty on cotton goods an issue in the strike. The strike in fact was not a strike but a lock-out asking the workers to take 11½ per cent less wages or in the alternative asking the Government to abolish the Excise Duty. It was actually a monstrous demonstration organised by the bourgeoisie against the Excise Duty and a demonstration based on the starvation and killing of the workers. The bourgeoisie dared not rouse the workers directly for political struggle against the Dictatorship, which was hampering the development of industries in India by the excise duties, mischief in exchange and such other means. Not daring to lead a revolutionary struggle for national freedom which would create conditions for the development of industries, not daring to even mildly fight for vital reforms for its own class, the bourgeoisie pushed the textile workers to the front, and forced a strike on them and put up the banner on which was inscribed their demand that "Government should abolish the Excise Duty or we shall starve the workers by lock-out until they choose to starve voluntarily by 11½ per cent". As Bombay produces half the total mill production of cotton goods in India, a strike in Bombay and the issues involved in it reach everybody in almost every big town in India. A long stoppage of Bombay mills disturbs the equilibrium of the economy of the whole of India. Therefore it was the Bombay bourgeoisie which chose to bring the Excise Duty question to the fore by this vile form of demonstration. The bourgeoisie was using the workers to bring pressure on the Government machinery, to get relief for its own class of about two crores a year by the abolition of the Duty, a task which it had failed to accomplish in the toy legislatures in which it had sat from year to year with a show of ridiculous opposition and speeches.

The Imperialist Government granted the demand of the Indian bourgeoisie and abolished the Duty, and the Cotton Duties Act was repealed in April, 1926.

The abolition of the duty was not done by the Government in order to save the mill-workers from wage cuts. Neither was it an indication that the British bourgeoisie and the Indian Government had disagreed. It was also not an indication that Government favoured the industrialisation of India and an accelerated growth of the Indian bourgeoisie. The interests of Indian Capitalism are directly opposed to those of the British bourgeoisie and the abolition of the Excise Duty does not vitiate this proposition. It is a fact that conditions in England were not favourable for such a step on the part of the Government of India which exists first and foremost to protect the interests of the British bourgeoisie. The Liberal Industrial Inquiry Report says on this period: "From the middle of 1924 to the middle of 1925 in fact we actually lost ground due to a number of causes, including a general cessation in international trade the cessation of the special stimulus to British industry, of the Ruhr occupation, and the prospects and effects of the British return to gold in April, 1925. In June, 1925 the numbers of unemployed were some 250,000 more than in the year previously" (page 270). Yet within this general picture of British decline the textile industry was relatively in a better position. The unemployment of textile workers which was 120,000 in 1923 was only 60,000 in July 1925 out of 576,000, the total number of textile workers in England. While the percentage of registered unemployed in mining and metal was 20 per cent it was 8 per cent in textiles. It is a fact that India being the largest of British's cotton markets a big setback here would hit the British bourgeoisie, though not seriously yet substantially. But it must also be seen that just after the abolition of the Excise Duty, the imports from United Kingdom into India were rising from 955 milyds in 1922 to 1319 and 1644 milyds in 1923 and 1924 and were becoming steadier. These fluctuations are not much expressed in the total exports of British textile to all countries including India, which were steady from 1922 to 1925 round about 4150 to 4450 milyds. Though this was an absolute decline over the pre-war figure of 7000 milyds yet the industry had hopes of recovery and was not so much organised as in others, like the coal, iron, engineering etc. which formed the largest part of the total exports. Since the heavy export

industries with their protectionist policy for themselves ruled the day a concession to India's textiles was not going to create insuperable obstruction.

There was also another consideration and that was far more influential than the position of Lancashire as such in determining the fate of the concessions. It was the necessity of keeping Indian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sections engaged with few concessions here and there. With a crisis in unemployment rising in England, a very complicated situation on the continent and rising discontent in China it was paying to keep the Indian bourgeoisie just relieved for a while. With the Non-Co-operation Movement crushed, the bourgeoisie at the earliest available moment was running to the councils. The abolition of Excise Duty, the passing of the Steel Protection Act and such other things were the best toys with which to tempt the people to cling to the road of Swaraj through the Councils till other matters could be settled. Thus the abolition of the duty was in no way a policy to industrialise India.

The Government by abolishing the duty benefited the textile capitalists of the whole of India by about two crores a year and Bombay city by 96 lakhs. When the concession was made they cancelled the notices of wage cut, called off the lock-out and the workers resumed work in a mood of victory, in December, 1925. The strike had lasted for nearly three months. The textile capitalists of Bombay in two years had made a saving in cost of production of 50 lakhs a year by cancellation of bonus payments in 1924 and 96 lakhs a year by remission of the Excise Duty in 1925. They had asked for a wage cut of 11½ per cent yielding them only 70 lakhs a year, while actually they got 96 lakhs equivalent to a wage cut of 16 per cent. For all this the workers had been starved for three months losing 1½ crores in wages, several killed and wounded in firing and there was an increase in their indebtedness. The Indian bourgeoisie had fought its anti-imperialist battle against the Excise Duty on the corpses of the Bombay workers and having won, it was out again within a year, with its hired bayonets turned towards the workers, for forcing another wage cut on them.

### **109. The Japanese competition and Tariff Board—rationalisation and attack on wages—partial strikes and their failure**

The imperialist war had destroyed once for all the equilibrium of capitalist economy, and the violent oscillations felt all the world over were not showing signs of returning to normalcy, though the violence of this oscillation had mitigated since 1923, the year of the defeat of the German proletariat and the beginning of the period of partial stabilisation. The imperialists of Europe started schemes of reconstruction and stabilisation; international loans, guarantees and building up of new combines were renewed with vigour. As usual the first onslaught of these movements was felt by the workers. British capitalist economy undertook superhuman efforts to rationalise production and effect wage cuts. The working-class resisted, the general strike of 1926 followed and was smashed. With a strong Conservative Government, a defeated working-class and corrupt labour aristocracy, a drive to assemble the Empire's resources to suppress the colonial discontent and to arrest the decline of British Capitalism was begun. The result was that the Chinese Revolution was suppressed with the help of the counter-revolutionary Chinese bourgeoisie. In India the exchange ratio was turned in favour of the British export trade, the suggestion of the Indian bourgeoisie to give it more political reforms was rejected and an all-Imperialist, all-British Simon Commission was announced.

Just as the Indian bourgeoisie had taken advantage of the war, so had other countries. In the textile trade Japan and China had advanced very rapidly. Whereas the all-Asiatic spindle strength in 1913 was 9,384,000, it rose to 17,827,000 in 1927—a rise of 90 per cent—while the British increase was only 3 per cent.

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Out of these 17 millions Japan claimed 6 million spindles. During and after the war, the Japanese had not in any way penetrated the Indian market. But long ago she had shown signs of competing in goods like long cloth and shirting with the Indian mills. Proposals of an alliance between Lancashire and Bombay



were discussed and almost agreed upon through the diplomatic services of one of the richest Bombay mill-owners, Sir Ness Wadia. By that arrangement Lancashire was not to compete in lower counts with Bombay while Bombay would not move up to higher counts, and both were to keep out Japan. But the arrangement for higher political reasons did not find support with the Government of India who refused a protective duty against Japan. But the competition of Japanese textiles began to increase and their imports into India from 155 milyds in 1924-25 began to mount up to 217, 214 and 323 milyds, in 1925, 1926 and 1927 respectively. In the total imports of over 2,000 milyds, this amount was negligible. But the fact that the bulk of the imports competed directly in price with some of the varieties produced by the largest mills in Bombay gave strength to the cry of Japanese competition.

The Bombay bourgeoisie soon after the 1925 strike asked the Government of India for a protective duty. The Government refused. They next asked for the appointment of a Tariff Board to enquire into the state of the industry and its claims for protection. The Government of India agreed to this and the Tariff Board started its enquiry into the industry.

The demand for the Board had come from the Bombay mill-owners. The mills in other centres were not interested in it. Having once asked for the Board the mill-owners could not but appear before it with some materials. These materials were mainly directed to showing the so-called high wages the owners were paying in Bombay. But the main ground on which the Bombay magnates had asked for protection and enquiry was the Japanese competition. As regards the mill-owners attempts to substantiate their claim on this ground, the Tariff Board observed: "The attitude adopted by the Bombay Mill-owners' Association in this regard calls for some comment. We consider that we were entitled to expect from that body, which had applied for protection against unfair competition from Japan, full information as to the nature and extent of that competition..... It was also, we consider, reasonably to be expected that some information as to the markets in India into which the Japanese goods have penetrated would be placed before us. Little or no information was forthcoming from the Bombay Mill-owners'

Association upon any of these heads." (Quotation in Exh: D 401, page 17). Another ground that the Bombay magnates advanced was the severity of the competition from the up-country mills due to low wages prevailing there. On this point also the Board observed: "All that can be said is, therefore, that the cost of production statements show that production both in yarn and cloth in Ahmedabad and in efficient up-country mills is as high as it is in Bombay." When the Board asked them to submit cost of production accounts 21 mills out of 275 supplied them. Acting on such information the Tariff Board made its recommendations, on the basis of which, the mill-owners in Bombay started their attack on workers' wages and standards in 1927 and 1928.

The workers in Bombay also submitted representations to the Board on their conditions of life and work, on the horrible practices of unlimited fines, assaults, forfeitures of wages etc. The result was that the Board asked the mill-owners to take more work from the workers for the same wages and this recommendation to increase exploitation they christened with that deceptive phrase, "increasing efficiency."

The news of the recommendations was not understood in all its aspects by the Bombay workers, until the mill-owners launched a direct attack and held the Tariff Board report in their front as their passport to the support of "public opinion". Where the workers worked 180 spindles on Rs. 26/- a month they were asked to look after 360 on Rs. 39/- half the increase of wage for double the increase in work. The Tariff Board found that there was a marked disparity between spinners' and weavers' wages and thought that the disparity ought to be removed. The mill-owners in order to remove the disparity instead of raising the spinning wages, proposed to bring the weavers' down. Schemes of wholesale rationalisation, not by means of improved technique or amalgamation of scattered plants or capital but by the simple and inexpensive method of doubling the work of all spinners and weavers, were planned out and the strongest of the financial syndicates took upon themselves the task of launching out the first attack and breaking the workers' resistance which was rightly expected to be most determined. Once again the workers found a

committee of so-called impartial judges—the Tariff Board—supporting the ruin of workers' peace and his life in the interest of the bourgeoisie. There are no neutrals, the workers learnt, and no impartial third parties in the class-struggle. He who is not for us is against us, was the lesson repeated.

The work of breaking the workers' resistance and introducing new methods was begun by E.D. Sassoon and Company, Limited, which is one of the biggest combines in the textile industry of the whole of India. With the financial backing of a banking house organised on an international scale, immense credit, age-old experience associated with the name of the Sassoons and an efficient technical staff that high finance can command this company was the only one in Bombay to dare such an experiment. They began the introduction of the new Sweating System in August, 1927 in two of their mills. Immediately there was a strike which lasted for a whole month and ended in the beginning of September. The workers resumed work on the understanding that the adoption of the three-loom system would be optional. On resumption one by one all who did not accept the system were dismissed. Without any strong organisation of their own the workers were out to fight a big octopus.

For two months there was no flagrant attack, but the beginning of year 1928 saw a concerted attack in 9 mills, 8 of the Sassoons and one of Sir Ness Wadia. The Spring Mills introduced double frame working and piece rates in spinning. The Sassoon Mills introduced double frame working only. The strike affected over 16,000 workers. The Sassoons strike broke down by February, 25th and the Spring Mills ended in compromise on 16th January. One by one the strongest of the owners began their attacks, the three principal parties being the Sassoons, Wadias and Fazalbhoys. These three amongst themselves combined the largest part of the spindles and capital in Bombay, employing about 52,000 workers. These three houses are the dictators of Bombay textiles and consequently of Bombay finance. Between August 1927 and April 1928 there were as many as 24 strikes. In this the Apollo workers faced two strikes (1st August-2nd September

1927 and 2nd January-25th February 1928), the Spring Mills twice (2nd January-16th January 1928 and 31st January-6th February 1928), the Textile Mills three times (21st February-25th February and 17th March-3rd April and 7th April-24th April 1928), the Rachel Sassoon twice (2nd January-25th February and 3rd-4th March 1928). Out of them 21 disputes were lost, one was compromised and two merged into the General Strike. Out of these 24 disputes 12 arose out of the measures adopted by the Sassoons, 5 by Sir Ness Wadia, the textile magnate with very big reserves and unique in some of his working methods. Two arose from the Fazalbhoy and the rest from individual owners. If along with this it is remembered that the General Strike began with the whole Fazalbhoy group closing down on 16th April, the trend of the mill-owners' attack, the chief sources of it and the huge combines that stood behind it, become clearly visible.

The mill-owners had seen the resistance of the workers in 1924 and 1925. Though beaten they had held out for nearly two months in one case and three months in another. Even though without any solid organisation they had combined when attacked. So the mill-owners were unwilling to face a General Strike every year and especially when the trade prospects of 1927 were better than in previous years. They therefore adopted the tactic of breaking the workers' resistance by groups, and as shown above the first battle was given by the strongest syndicates and was won by them. 40,000 workers' standard of work and living were made worse. Thus by five instalments and within one year i.e. by the end of 1928, the mill-owners would have introduced the new Sweating System in almost all the mills, increased the hours of work in several departments and reduced the rates of wages of weavers, wherever the three-loom system could not have been introduced. By the end of 1928 30,000 workers, if the above policy had been allowed to continue, would have been absolutely thrown out of work. the working time of over 20,000 would have been raised by 18 per cent and the same number would have lost 21 per cent in earnings by the forced increase in hours of work without a corresponding increase in the rates of wages. This new attack was unprecedented in the history of the Bombay working-class or

the working-class of Europe and America, which also was being beaten down in wages but not on such a monster scale. In the isolated battles the workers had lost completely. The strikes had lasted for nearly 1½ million working days, (the Bombay Labour office has not given any exact data on this) and the workers had lost over 20 lakhs in wages by the stoppage, apart from the permanent loss resulting from the defeat. If it had been spread over the whole industry the stoppage represented 11 days' General Strike. Such four instalments covering the whole industry would have meant a stoppage equivalent to two months at the most, if we take into consideration the fact that the single stoppage of the Sassoon group of 24,000 workers lasted for one month and 24 days. The advantage of the new tactic lay in this fact. It was a system of "guerrilla lock-out". The general introduction of the new system, increase of hours and a wage-cut would have generated such a tremendous opposition that the resulting strike according to previous experiences would have gone on for more than three months at least. By the tactic of isolated attacks, the mill-owners rightly calculated on easy victories and a saving in the prolonged stoppage of work of 1 to 1½ months. The plans of the bourgeoisie were well laid and based on shrewd business calculations.

**SECTION 2.—The General Textile Strike in Bombay, April to October 1928: paras 110-127**

**110. The failure of partial strikes necessitated a General Strike—direct causes of the 1928 strike**

Having broken the resistance of 1/5th of the workers the mill-owners proceeded to launch their second attack on the workers of the big Fazalbhoy group which is comprised of 11 mills employing 21,000 workers. One of their mills, the Kastoorchand Mill was already on strike since the 3rd April for reduction in rates of blanket weaving. On 16th April, 1928 7 more mills of this group struck work (P. W. 245-Hassan Ali) along with three other mills in the immediate vicinity of this group. The closing down

of this group, the firing on the workers and the death of one of them, Parashram Jadhav on 23rd April brought about the General Strike, the conditions for which had been ripening since January.

The method of attack followed by the Fazalbhoy group was different from that of the Sassoons and Wadias. Though the Fazalbhoyes were a big syndicate they had not such strong financial reserves as the Sassoons and Wadias. Therefore that group could not afford to meet the workers with a direct attack on clear-cut issues. They followed a method of subterfuge. They transferred a large number of their looms to weave finer varieties of cloth, mostly new patterns of *dhotis* and bordered grey goods with an introduction of artificial silk yarns. While they raised the counts of yarn woven, they did not raise the rate of wages per pound with the effect that as the output in finer counts weighed less and the rate per pound remained the same, the workers received less earnings. They transformed their Pearl Mill all on finer counts and artificial silk. They also introduced the high draft system in spinning. But the machinery set up was of such a type that the management agreed to alter it in December 1928, i.e. after the General Strike. Having put up on higher counts, the doffing was low in spinning and the management started reducing men in the spinning on this account. But their book-calculations about the percentage fall in doffing and the consequent reductions in number of assistants to the spinner (that is doffer boys etc.) were vitiated by one factor which they had not taken into consideration, and that factor was bad mixings in cotton. The accumulated result of all this was reduction of the employed workers, increase of work for those employed, in the spinning and fall of earnings of the weavers. This development ultimately affected every worker in the textile process and bred serious discontent. That the mills were put up on finers is evidence from the returns of spinning counts. Counts 11 to 22s had come down from 153 million pounds in 1926-27 to 131 in 1927-28. Counts 21 to 30s had risen from 104 million pounds to 107. But the jump is more noteworthy in 31 to 40s. From 9.2

million it rose to 12.3 million pounds, a rise of more than 33 per cent. In above 40s from 4.3 million pounds to 5, an increase of 16 per cent.

It is not so much the actual increase that matters as the trend of production and the inevitable suffering of the workers arising from it. It was this that brought out the Fazalbhoy group. It was this that caught hold of the imagination and feelings of the workers. They had seen 40,000 of their comrades beaten down alone in an isolated single-handed fight. They now saw that it was not a question of one or two mills but of the whole industry heaping more burdens on their head. The 40,000 already defeated in the previous three months were convinced of this by their personal experience. But they alone were not powerful enough, in the absence of organisation, to convince the whole textile working-class of the oncoming waves. It was necessary for another big mass of workers to learn from experience of the danger threatening all of them. Such a big mass was only to be found in the Fazalbhoy group. I say even this that had the mill-owners not attacked the workers either in the Petit Mills or other individual mills, it is doubtful whether the General Strike would have come about in April. The fact that the next group of workers to be affected by unemployment and fall in wages were those from the Fazal group at once turned the scale in favour of the strike. Because these combined with the 40,000 already embittered formed a strong bloc of 60,000 men, coming from mills situated in the most densely populated part of the textile city and with the largest and widest system of contact for the propagation and exchange of thoughts, feelings and experience. Any general mass discontent or even a strong grievance only among the weavers of the Sassoons, Fazals and Wadias, can at any moment form a solid basis for a General Strike. Such a situation had not matured in January, but it had matured in April. Therefore in spite of appeals, a General Strike did not come about in January but was an accomplished fact after seven days of the pay day in April. The historical development of the industry, the personal experience of rank and file workers and the conviction born of that experience that nothing but a General

Strike could stay the threatening wage cuts, unemployment, and worsened conditions brought about the General Strike in April 1928.

The Prosecution allegation in the matter of this General Strike is that in fact the strike was engineered and brought about by us; that the workers had no grievances that we formulated grievances and demands long after the strike had taken place, and this we did because we want the general strikes as rehearsals for the final act of insurrection—we do not care whether the workers have or have not anything to gain immediately from the strikes. They brought the Superintendent of the Office of the Mill-owners' Association (P.W. 234) with a document purporting to be a letter from the Joint Mill Strike Committee to the Mill-owners' Association putting before them the demands of the workers. The argument behind the presentation of this witness and that document was to show that the letter of demands was dated 3rd May and the strike had taken place 10 days earlier, the grievances formulated in that letter were purely an afterthought of those leaders who had brought about the strike for the purposes of a "rehearsal" for advancing Communist influence amongst the workers. But after the witness had been called the Prosecution changed their line and decided not to put in that letter, which was then brought on record as a defence document (Ex. D 3). One would fail to see the reason of bringing this witness before the Court if the above points were not remembered. Because once the Prosecution had given up the idea of putting in that document as their exhibit to support their argument of "a General Strike without grievances", and their attempt to prove the 1928 strike as a bad deed of the Communists, the need for this witness vanishes altogether. But in order to justify their waste of money and to remove the absurdity of the whole show they put him in the box to testify to the well-known historical fact that there was a General Strike of textile mills in Bombay in the year 1928 and that he, the Office Superintendent of the Mill-owners' Association, actually remembered that historical fact. But the memory of that excellent Office Superintendent was not sure when that historical fact, which



according to the Prosecution was a rehearsal for insurrection came to an end. He "thought" that it ended on 4th October 1928.

The same line is followed by the Prosecution in their examination of two other witnesses who were personally cognisant of those 24 disputes that took place prior to the General Strike and other facts leading to it (P.W. 244 R.S. Patwardhan and P.W. 245, Hassan Ali). Not one question that would have suggested the existence of grievances and strikes prior to and leading to the General Strike was put to them by the Prosecution. Their trend of question is to show that suddenly in April, 1928, Bombay found itself in the grip of a general textile strike and that some of the accused here were the cause of it. It was the Defence that showed by cross-examination of these witnesses the existence of long-drawnout disputes arising from the introduction of new rational systems of work and other grievances, that the General Strike had not come up suddenly as if raised from hell by the evil spirits of Communism. It is to refute the allegations of the Prosecution that I have stated so far the development that inevitably and historically led to the General Strike in April 1928. This can also be shown by reference to Fawcett Committee's Report which says: "On the 3rd May, 1928 the Joint Strike Committee published a list of terms to be conceded by the mill-owners, which has now come to be known as the "17 demands" and which formed one of the items submitted to us for consideration. But we may state here *that many of these demands were not put forward for the first time when they were so formulated.* During the few months immediately preceding the General Strike there were several strikes in individual mills and in groups of mills in connection with one or more of the grievances submitted in the 17 demands for removal" (page 4). The report then gives a list of the sixteen strikes which occurred between August, 1927 and May, 1928, to which I have referred above. This list has also been confirmed by P.W. 244. After a mention of the fact that in all instances prior to April 1928 the strikes ended in favour of the employers, except in one case, the Committee summarises the main grievances of the workers prior to the General Strike:

"(1) Direct cut in wages; (2) Reduction in monthly earnings' owing to the following indirect causes: (a) Introduction of new varieties of cloth at rates which did not bring the level of wages to those earned on the production of the old sorts; (b) reduction of piece rates to meet unanticipated high production by individual operatives; (c) adjustment in rates to bring them in line with rates prevailing in other mills; (d) no adjustment made to increase rates in cases where mills went on finer counts; (e) the introduction of artificial silk and inferior raw material; (f) gradual withdrawal of bonuses such as good attendance and efficiency bonus, and free railway passes to workers etc; and (g) introduction of a method of paying wages on the weight of the cloth after it had undergone a subsequent process instead of the actual weight produced on the loom; (3) The introduction of new methods of work involving a reduction in the number of operatives employed, notably in the Sassoon group (that is three looms and double frame working) and the fear of spreading of this system to other mills in the city; and (4) The increase in the hours of mechanics in some mills from 8½ hours to 10 hours per day, and the declaration of a general intention to level up the hours of work for all mill operatives in all mills to 10 hours per day.

"In addition to the above there were several minor grievances in connection with the infliction of fines, dismissals, the practice of handing over spoilt cloth to the weavers in lieu of wages. It would, we think, serve no useful purpose to go at length into the exact causes of the General Strike or to attempt to apportion blame for it on either side. There were no doubt various contributory causes, but in our opinion it can be safely said that the chief reason for its commencement and continuation for a period of nearly six months was the fear of unemployment created by the new methods of work introduced by Messrs. E.D. Sassoon and Co. in their mills" (pp 6 and 17). As regards the strenuous propaganda carried on by certain leaders in favour of a General Strike and the suggestion that it was due to them that the strike came about, the Committee observed that "had there been no grievances it would have been impossible for a handful of men to keep so many

workers on strike for a period amounting very nearly to six months" (Page 2). This knocks out the allegations that we were the sole or chief cause of General Strike, that the workers themselves had no grievances and that we brought about the strike—grievances or no grievances—to further the aims of the conspiracy. The General Strike of 1928 just as any other previous strike was an outcome of the objective conditions of world Capitalism in general and of Bombay's textile industry in particular.

By this it is not meant to suggest that individuals and groups of individuals played no part in this event. To rule out altogether the role of the individuals and groups would mean becoming adherents of predestination, fatalism and such other similar creeds which are totally incompatible with the scientific attitude of historical materialism. Ability, experience, daring intellect and such other qualities of the leadership do affect the course of events to a certain extent. But while Marxism does recognise their place it does not subscribe to the proposition of bourgeois individualism and hero worship, that an individual man can make and unmake history in spite of or against the course of historical development. With these limitations I do say that I along with others did play a certain part in the making of and guiding the General Strike. I shall deal briefly with that part now.

**111. The attitude of the B.T.L. Union and Mr. N.M. Joshi—the G.K. Mahamandal's changing attitude—General Strike complete**

I took no part in the strikes that took place before 1928 January. It was only in January that I went to the mill area along with Mr. Bakhale, with whom I was a Joint Secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress. Mr Bakhale negotiated the Spring Mill strike and I was present on one or two occasions at these interviews with the management. That strike was partially successful. But we could do nothing in the Sassoon Mill Strike. There was no room there for compromise and negotiations. I found that due to my ignorance at that time of the intricacies of the industry, the

burdens on the working-class and such other things that a unionist ought to know, I could be of no use to the strike. So I ceased to take an active part in the strike and retired to acquaint myself thoroughly with all facts of the situation. Moreover I found hesitation amongst the other leaders as to the course to be recommended to the workers. There was one trend that argued that without a General Strike these grievances would not be solved; there was another trend which argued that as the grievances were not felt by a sufficiently wide mass, the General Strike would not come about and succeed. The Bombay Textile Labour Union issued a statement on 8.1.28 in the name of Mr. N.M. Joshi disapproving of the idea of General Strike. That statement was not wholly against the General Strike as such, Mr. Joshi had seen and taken part in two big General Strikes and even as a moderate Trade Unionist\* he could not be expected to oppose the General Strike on principle. What he did was to oppose it on the ground of possibility, feasibility and possible success. Being out of touch with the rank and file of the fighting workers and not believing as we do in the immense power of the proletariat, he doubted their capacity, solidarity and intelligence. All these doubts are typically put in one sentence of his statement. He says: "As regards the present strike I feel sure that there is a possibility of its spreading, although I may not wish it, if no satisfactory solution is found out almost immediately. And I do feel that a General Strike under the existing conditions may fail. There is a very large number of workers who are not yet affected by the new system and they may not come out: and even supposing they come out they may not hold out long enough to make the General Strike a success. I would not therefore risk a General Strike if I feel that it would fail." (Ex. D 567 and D 390 A.I.T.U.C. Bulletin April, 1928, page 111).

That settled the attitude of the Bombay Textile Labour Union and the large section of workers in a group of mills which were under its influence.

But the largest section of the workers in the most crowded part of the mill area were under the influence of the G.K. Mahamandal. The Sassoon Mill Strike was led by the G.K.M. The G.K.M. reflected the opinion of the most advanced group of workers in the mills. Though not possessing an up-to-date well-kept organisation the Mahamandal, with a membership varying between four and six thousands, had a sufficiently wide organisation and contact. The Mahamandal did not take up the idea of the General Strike in January. And when a statement in the press in the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Party was issued in January 1928 stating that the mill-owners wanted to crush the workers section by section in order to avoid a determined resistance as was given in 1924 and 1925, and that only a General Strike could stop the rationalisation and wage-cut drive, the Mahamandal did not take up that statement seriously (P. 928, P. 1016 and D. 519). This was quite in keeping with the workers' mood at that time. The Sassoon Strike had not broken down, the attack in the mills was not yet very evident. The plans of the mill-owners were not yet thoroughly known; therefore it was that the G.K.M. in its leaflet said: "Men in those factories in which no change has taken place should continue their work and help the men in the E.D. Sassoon Company by taking them as substitutes by turns and by collecting contributions". Strikers were asked not to go and demonstrate near the other mills which were working. [D 439 (33)].

D/- 8.12.31

Till the Sassoon group strike was on and others had not taken place this mentality prevailed. With the B.T.L. Union and the Mahamandal both against the General Strike, it was impossible for any group of persons to bring about a General Strike, because the two organisations put together and agreed on a point meant the opinion of the textile workers. In a handbill (issued between 13th and 24th February 1928) the Mahamandal wrote: "Men in those mills in which no sort of change has been effected should strengthen themselves by continuing their work" and asked the

workers to taboo the proposal of a General Strike coming from "nondescript upstarts" unless it came from the Mahamandal which "if it is thought proper to declare a General Strike will give a public notice to all to that effect." [Exh: D 439 (30)].

The tactic of localised strikes failed, the Sassoon workers were beaten and the mill-owners commenced the second instalment of their attack just as was predicted by those "non-descript upstarts". The effect of this was at once reflected in the Mahamandal. The workers began to consider seriously whether it was possible to stem the advancing attacks by isolated strikes. The Mahamandal in a handbill says (about 26th March 1928): "As the strike in the Sassoon group was broken other owners have begun to foist upon the workers the system of three looms and two frames. So also attempts to cut down wages are being made by resorting to various stratagems..... We workers cannot be able to cope up with this unless in the end we all become one and tenaciously declare a General Strike." [Exh: P. 1464 which is same as D 439 (31).] The words "in the end" and "future general strike" still express hesitation to recommend unequivocally the general strike as the only weapon, because the workers themselves were hesitating and not a very large section of them was yet convinced that they were being attacked as the result of a general plan of the textile bourgeoisie. They still thought that all the wage-cuts and new systems of work were the freaks of individual owners and therefore the strikes would be localised to those individual mills. On 1st April 1928 the Mahamandal issued a statement asking the workers of the textile mill to resume work and removing some of the misunderstandings prevalent in the workers about spinners' wages. (Exh: D 497). The workers resumed work on 3rd April (vide Fewcett Report and P.W. 244) but came out again on 7th April as they were asked to clean machinery every day which was not the former practice, and to drop tickets. The Simplex Mill strike could not be negotiated and the Kastoorchand Mill came out on 3rd April, the same day on which the textile mill resumed work. The Simplex Mill was in the Jacob Circles area, a mill doing very skilled silk work in weaving, the Kastoorchand Mill

was at Dadar and the textile mill at Parbhadevi, three situated at long distances from each other, which meant a great difficulty in organisation and control of the strike by the financially poor Mahamandal. This guerrilla tactic of the mill-owners, the fruitlessness of the isolated struggles for the last six months naturally had their effect on the G.K.M. Hesitation and vacillation gave way. The three strikes shook the Mahamandal's ideology and they had to accept the viewpoint held by the W.P.P. as early as January 1928. On 9th April, 1928, the G.K.M. issued a handbill saying: "You are aware that this danger and the wicked attack of the owners on wages cannot be averted without a General Strike." (P. 1465—P.W. 245). It also said: "In every mill the owners with the intention of devising means for reducing the worker's wages by 25 per cent are resorting to one or other of devices. ....

"All this scheming of the owners is going on in order to take revenge upon workers who gave a fight in the year 1925, got our 25 per cent and became successful.....If you want to maintain your wages, there is only one remedy for it, our unity is that remedy. The men in the mills of Bombay must declare a General Strike....." [Exh: D 439 (29)]. In the meanwhile rumblings of reduced earnings and dismissed men began to grow louder from the Fazalbhoj group. The Mahamandal decided unequivocally on preparing for a General Strike on 13th April, 1928. (Minute Book of the G.K.M. Exh: D 420, page 12). But in the absence of a wide organisation, funds and other requisites the resolution remained as a prophetic reading of the workers' mood or feeling of their pulse. Nothing beyond a meeting here and there of the two mills already on strike was done or could be done. The spontaneous strike of the workers on 16th April in ten mills confirmed the idea of the Mahamandal that the workers were now veering round to the idea of the General Strike as a remedy to stop the mill-owners' attack. The leadership became confident and on 17th April the G.K.M. came out with a definite appeal this time to make the General Strike complete and resist the attack of Capitalism. [Exh: D 439 (28)].

**112. B.T.L. Union joins the strike—was the G.K.M. controlled by the W.P.P.?—how it was pushed into the General Strike by the rank and file**

On 18th April at Nagu Sayaji Wadi meeting a Strike Committee of 85 members was elected at the instance of the G.K.M. So long the Bombay Textile Labour Union after its statement on 10th January, showing a defeatist attitude about the idea of the General Strike had followed the policy of "tail endism". But when the workers struck on 16th April it moved forward to take charge of affairs and again guide them into a channel of affairs and again guide them into a channel of submission and to stop the spreading of the strike. On 18th April they also called a meeting to elect a Strike Committee at Delisle Road. But before they could collect even a handful of listeners the Mahamandal had finished its meeting at Nagu Sayaji Wadi. The same audience went to the Delisle Road to frustrate the attempt of the B.T.L. Union to side-track the workers into a defeatist policy. At Delisle Road we secured a complete victory, and Mr. Ginwalla of the B.T.L. Union plainly saw the following that our lead had secured and agreed to our Strike Committee with some additions of his followers.

The conclusion from this is; the world conditions of Capitalism affected the Bombay Textile bourgeoisie, as a part of world Capitalism. In order to secure its profits it attacked workers' standards. The workers first resisted by groups as they were attacked by groups. But when they saw through the general plan of attack, they became convinced that a General Strike alone and not a resistance by groups would help them. The conditions for a General Strike and this conviction became ripe in April. The proposal of a General Strike though made in January was not taken up then by the workers' organisations. The G.K. Mahamandal's gradual developments towards the acceptance of the necessity of a General Strike grew in proportion as the intensity of the mill-owners' attack increased. The various handbills and decisions of the G.K.M. only reflected the growing inclination of the workers towards the General Strike and the conviction that it was necessary to save them from wage-cuts and



unemployment. From a complete repudiation of the idea and of those who advanced it, the Mahamandal advanced towards accepting it in a hesitating manner and ultimately was forced by events to agree to it, to work for it and lead it. The very fact that the B.T.L. Union with 10,000 members at first opposed the strike, and then had to fall in line on 18th April, shows that in this strike the rank and file was forcing the lead on the organisations and not that the leadership was consciously and effectively guiding the rank and file which in fact ought to be the case, because it is the function of leadership to anticipate the enemies attack and meet it in advance rather than follow like tail-ends.

The fact that the G.K.M. had one member of the W.P.P. as its adviser for a long time, that the W.P.P. since January 1928 had given the slogan of a General Strike does not affect the above view. The G.K.M. had never accepted the objects or the policy of the W.P.P. nor even that of the Party member, whose help the Mandal took from time to time. The history of the Mandal's connection with the Party member itself illustrates the reactions of the G.K.M. to the outside situation. The Secretary of the Mandal and the President, as also the Managing Committee, did not accept our Party member's advice, and even when on personal and other issues a split was threatened between the two sections of the Mandal, one led by the Mr. Mayekar and another by Mr. Alwe, both were agreed upon not accepting the General Strike slogan. The W.P.P. on the advice of the Party member on the G.K.M. had denounced the Secretary (Exh: P. 1016) but the Mandal as such was far from endorsing it. In its meeting of 4th February, 1928 it blamed our Party member for the denunciation (D 420, page 7), but the failure of the Sassoon group strike of 25th February changed this attitude and in its meeting of 28th February the Mandal disapproved of the policy and conduct of its Secretary, whom it had wanted to defend as against our Party member in its meeting of 4th February. A few more strikes strengthened this attitude, as found in its meeting of 20th March, 1928, and the Managing Committee came out with a handbill completely vindicating our Party member's policy and conduct (Exh: 1462).

The split came to a head on 27th March and the Secretary was dismissed and asked to hand over charge which he refused to do. This was announced to the workers about 30th March (Exh: P. 1463) by the President of the G.K.M. The anti-General Strike section weakened; the pro-General Strike section under the pressure of mass opinion became dominant. When the General Strike did come, many members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party were found associating with the Mahamandal. But the Mandal as such had never adopted consciously or unconsciously the general platform of the W.P.P. It was still shy of what the bourgeoisie calls the "outsiders". It was still frightened of the bold lead of the W.P.P. members given to the workers in their public meetings, the uncompromising class ideology held up before them and accepted by them. The Mahamandal executive had lagged behind and it dissociated itself from the W.P.P. members' speeches; though it could not dare to make this resolution public as the rank and file approved of our policy (Exh: D 420, page 15 dated 2nd May, 1928). This was the effect probably of the nervous reaction of the executive to the monster May Day demonstration on 1st May 1928, unheard of amongst the textile workers on such a large scale before. Though the moderate B.T.L. Union, the Seamen's Union and some others had participated officially in the May Day, the Mahamandal was not officially a party to it. None of its executive members was there. On 30th April it had appointed Messrs. Jhabwala, Nimbkar and myself as advisers, but on 2nd May it repudiated responsibility for our speeches amongst the workers. (D. 420). This shows that we had not captured the G.K.M. and that the G.K.M. was not a section of the W.P.P. nor was it under the influence of the W.P.P. This naturally reverses the process which is alleged against us with regard to strikes—that we form fractions, capture unions, foment grievances and then bring about a General Strike, as a prelude to the insurrection. Here the process started with small strikes and then the General Strike. We expressed our opinion as to how to fight the enemies attack and analyse the situation. Our predictions came true and our

advice was accepted by the workers. Still we had not captured the organisation of the workers nor had built one of our own. The strike was not our creation, but we were the creation of the strike. An organisation had not brought about the General Strike of 1928, but the strike had brought forth an organisation. The casual process of the 1928 strike was exactly the reverse of that of the 1929 strike, and it was quite natural in view of the state of the class-consciousness and organisation of the workers at the beginning of 1928.

And as for the last link in the allegation, that is the question of insurrection, it has not come at all nor was there even a talk about it. The function of leadership is to anticipate the movements of the enemy's forces. We did anticipate to a large extent. The function of leadership is to discuss and find out the methods to meet successfully the attack. We found that the General Strike alone at that time could stop the mill-owners' attack. The function of leadership is to organise and lead the battle of the masses. We could not do that before the masses themselves were convinced and took to the General Strike. In this we were not open to the charge of "khvostism" because we were inexperienced, without any roots amongst the workers, without any organisation and other requisites necessary for an organisational leadership. Therefore we could only give an ideological lead and wait for its acceptance by the workers themselves.

The bourgeoisie, the Government and those parties who were against us advanced one more argument to prove that we were the sole or the major cause of the General Strike. The very fact, they say, that it was necessary to give a slogan of General Strike and that it was given by the W.P.P. as far back as January 1928 and throughout February and March, was sufficient to show that, unlike the previous general strikes this strike was not spontaneous. The answer to this is very simple. I have already shown the reasons of the previous General Strikes in the Bombay textile industry. The first series were due to the rising prices and

the refusal of the mill-owners to increase wages. The workers fought four such General Strikes and won. The next series were due to the concerted and unanimous attack of the mill-owners on the wages of the workers. In those two strikes, the mill-owners as a whole announced the stoppage of bonus and wage-cuts. The nature of the attack was quite plain to the workers and was common to all. Therefore it was not necessary at all to call for a General Strike. They were in fact half general strikes and half lockouts. Such was not the case in 1928. The mill-owners would not adopt wage-cuts and rational systems throughout the whole of the industry in an open manner and by a decision of the owners as a whole and made known to the workers. The wage-cuts were introduced by several underhand methods and group by group of mills. Therefore it was necessary for some one who had the perspective of the whole industry to study the trend of the attack, its reasons and modus operandi and apprise all the workers of it. In the absence of an all-embracing Trade Union organisation this task had to be done by the W.P.P. The isolated attacks of the owners were part of a general attack. Therefore the isolated strikes had to be substituted by a General Strike. By the very nature of the attack, the general strike as affecting certain groups of mills had to be anticipatory. Therefore a slogan had to be given in advance. Though the slogan was given it could do nothing as is shown before until a large section of the workers by their own experience found themselves victims of wage-cuts and rationalisation.

**113. Did we prolong the strike—negotiations and classes—how the bourgeoisie uses the different general strikes—strikes becoming longer and fought harder since 1917—compromise with the B.T.L. Union and formation of the Joint Strike Committee**

I will now take up the question did we prolong the strike, did we try that the strike should not be negotiated and called off so that discontent should spread more, the strong hold of textile

Capitalism be dislocated and the workers grow revolutionary, without caring whether their immediate demands were satisfied or not, whether they starved or not?

As soon as a big strike takes place, the petty bourgeois humanitarians get busy and begin a hypocritical wailing about the suffering and starvation of the poor workers and their innocent children. So long as the workers are producing wealth for the bourgeoisie these humanitarian gangs never feel for the poor workers and their innocent children who may be dying slowly by hunger on starvation wages. But they come out of their holes when the strike is over. Because then they feel not that the workers are starving but that the fountain of their masters' wealth, their wealth, has stopped flowing. Then another set of the so-called third party men get busy trying to negotiate between the owners and the strikers. They call themselves neutrals but are not really so, because there are no neutrals in the class-struggle. These third party men, by their ideology if not their actual economic interests, are affiliated with the bourgeoisie. Their efforts at negotiations are efforts to convince the workers about the necessity of a wage cut, and shrewd business agents as they are, they do not fail to bring forward the argument of patriotism, the necessity of helping the Indian industry, by which is really meant the Indian bourgeoisie as against the foreign competition, that is the foreign bourgeoisie. These humanitarians are the most dangerous enemies of the working-class, more than the capitalists themselves. The latter stand naked as class enemies before the workers and therefore cannot by themselves create hesitation or corruption in the working-class so easily. But these humanitarians and neutral come as friends of the working-class and as in India even today the majority of the working-class leaders are invariably from the middle-class, they easily get access to the matters under dispute. They are too easily accepted as negotiators. But where the Trade Unions are strong, the leadership firm and the class consciousness of the workers quite alive and clear, no harm comes from these negotiators. In fact they

are then skilfully used for the smaller matters of the strike, without in any way being allowed to work for the interest of the bourgeoisie.

The slogan of the Bombay bourgeoisie in the 1925 strike was the abolition of the Excise Duty. The slogan in 1928 was the change of the exchange ratio. The Indian bourgeoisie in its constitutional fight had lost the battle of the exchange ratio in the Legislative Assembly. While the question was being fought most constitutionally, the Hon'ble Finance Member Sir Basil Blackett, accused the Indian bourgeoisie of trying to depreciate the workers' wage by advocating a low exchange ratio of 16d. He said: "The inevitable result of a reduction of the exchange to 16d. would be a series of strikes all over the country....." (Page 1750 Legislative Assembly Proceedings, dated 7.3.1927) Sir Basil adopted the attitude of a patron of the working-class and for *their* interest wanted an 18d. ratio. But the Indian bourgeoisie, the employers of the working-class also said the same thing. "If we still decide upon 18d. we shall be giving a mandate to the parties concerned to reduce wages and salaries..... If there is any effort on the part of the parties concerned to oppose the reduction of wages and salaries which must follow the 18d. rate it will mean serious struggles between capital and labour. And in this connection we may point out the fate of the highly organised and politically supported labour in England in the coal industry", said Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas in reply to Government (Legislative Assembly Proceedings, dated 7.3.1927, page 1803). And Sir Victor Sassoon at that time agreed with him (ibid, page 1785). The Government carried its point and therefore the Indian bourgeoisie had to show that the natural result of Government policy would be as predicted by it, that is a series of strikes in every industry. Both the imperialists and the bourgeoisie used the interest of the working-class as an argument to support their own class interests which amongst themselves were contradictory. But when the strikes did occur both the imperialists and the bourgeoisie united in crushing them. Because Imperialism harmed the Indian bourgeois interest, the Indian bourgeoisie did

not go to the working-class and peasantry, to organise them politically against Imperialism as a bourgeoisie which is really revolutionary would have done.

So when the textile strike began the bourgeoisie and its papers first opened a campaign against the 18d. ratio. This lasted throughout the January and February strikes. But the problem of the ratio was not so easy as the problem of the Excise Duty. The problem of the ratio affected the whole of the imperialist economy. The problem of the Excise Duty was a small one, limited to a fraction of the textile industry. A General Strike in Bombay and determined agitation helped by some other factors could solve the latter, but such forces were quite powerless against the ratio question. The Indian bourgeoisie knew this very well and therefore it concentrated more on crushing the strike than on the new ratio. Moreover the bourgeoisie also knew that even if the ratio were to be changed, the strikes would not be prevented for the simple fact that world economy was approaching another intense crisis which later on broke out in October 1929. The solution of the ratio question is not and was not a panacea for the deadlock in Indian Capitalism.

It is a fact that 1928 strike was the longest of all the textile strikes. But the reason for it is not to be sought in the leadership of the strike. The Prosecution say that it is the boast of the accused that they prolonged the strike. Well, if such a boast is there it is not of our personal powers or plans but it is a boast of the proletarian heroism and sacrifice that stood for six months the attacks of Government and the Indian bourgeoisie. Such a fight was not unexpected. If you examine by means of a graph the periods of duration of the strike since 1917 you will find that the strikes were all along becoming longer and being fought harder. In times of super-profits the bourgeoisie being unwilling to lose profits by stoppage of work yields to the workers' demands without much resistance. Therefore the strikes in the boom period of 1917-1921 were over in a few weeks. But those after 1921, began to be resisted stubbornly by the mill-owners and the period of duration began to rise steadily until it became longest in 1928.

In that year the world trade depression had become more acute and was rising, while the workers in Bombay since the 1925 strike had got some respite due to the fall in the prices of agricultural commodities and the consequent level of real wages going just above the previous starvation level which increased their capacity of resistance. To these factors was added the determined resistance of the big financial house of Sassoons on the side of the bourgeoisie and the determined resistance of the new leadership on the side of the workers. All these factors combined to make the struggle a prolonged one. But the main factor was the unwillingness of the mill-owners to negotiate the settlement with the workers and their leaders.

I shall now state what we did to negotiate the settlement and not to prolong it a day more than was necessary in the circumstances and how we explored all avenues of settlement except the criminal one of surrendering willingly the workers' cause.

It has been already stated that the General Strike action began on the 16th April, 1928. The workers on strike organised processions and meetings. On 18th a Strike Committee was formed. On the next day the Bombay Textile Labour Union which had kept aloof from the strike appointed its own Strike Committee and refused to accept our Committee. But the Strike Committee of the B.T.L. Union was merely a watching committee. The membership of the B.T.L.U. mainly came from the Mohammedan weavers in the Madanpura area, the Kurla Mills and a few workers from other mills. The skilled weavers of the B.T.L.U. had not been yet hit by wage cuts and so there was no driving force for the strike from that section. The B.T.L.U. was the last union in the world to preach militant solidarity to the workers and ask them to strike. It did not fight strikes but negotiated them with "good will", which invariably turned out to be good for the bourgeoisie and ill for the workers. Still the B.T.L.U. was financially strong, with a reserve of more than Rs. 10,000/-, and was in a position to command, some more funds if necessary from the welfare organisations with which it had connections. The G.K.M. and the militant Strike Committee of the strikers had not more than



Rs. 100/- and their organisers could scarcely pay their conveyance for organisation of the workers.

From 16th onwards the mills began to stop one by one. On 23rd April the police opened fire on a mass of the workers in the Sewri area. One of the workers by name Parasram Jadhav died of gunshot wounds on the spot. Contrary to the expectations of the police the firing did not break the strike but strengthened it. It aroused the solidarity of the workers. It made them indignant. The firing showed them that the police, the Government and the mill-owners who had sought the help of the police were one and that the workers must stand as one against them. The conservative anti-strike B.T.L.U. even was overrun by the strike feeling and all the mills closed down by 26th April, 1928 (P.W. 245).

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During this time serious negotiations were going on between the B.T.L. Union and us on the question of forming a Joint Strike Committee and presenting a united front to the mill-owners. B.T.L. Union was opposed to calling a General Strike, but once the strike was an accomplished fact and even its own sections were involved in it, its main grounds for keeping aloof from us vanished. Though we possessed the leadership of the strikers, we had no finances to guide and keep such a huge organisation going. We also wanted unity with the 30,000 workers who were more or less under the influence of the B.T.L. Union. Unity at that time with those confirmed Genevites and class collaborators would have strengthened the strike. Unity with them at that time meant a unity of one section of workers with another section and not merely a unity between leaders. A large section of workers by their own experience had yet to be convinced that our policy was the only right policy. Unity with the B.T.L. Union at that time gave us the opportunity to demonstrate the correctness of our policy and secure large contacts and financial strength, without in any way making us lose our direction affairs and the right to criticise if necessary our allies. Therefore steps were taken to form a Joint Strike Committee which ultimately was done on 2nd

May. The Joint Strike Committee consisted of 30 members, 15 from the B.T.L. Union, Mr. Joshi's section, and 15 from our section which had advocated the militant policy and was in the thick of the fight. It appointed two Joint Secretaries and two Joint Treasurers and in order to avoid a possible cause of friction it never appointed a permanent President of the Joint Strike Committee as such. Those of the members of that Joint Strike Committee who are now prisoners in this case are all from that section which advocated and fought for the General Strike till the workers' demands were granted. (An attempt has been made by some accused who now find it profitable to differ from us to divide these members in a peculiar manner between three unions. I shall deal with it separately.)

**114. P.W. Hassan Ali's mistakes—the Governor's visit, 27th April—the mill-owners' communiques in May,—our reply—Sir Cowasji Jehangir's visit—mill-owners refuse negotiations, 15th May**

The first thing that the Joint Strike Committee did was to send to the Mill-owners' Association a formal draft of the demands of the strikers which it did on 3rd May, 1928 (P.W. 234, Exh: D3). It has already been shown that these demands were known to the mill-owners before the General Strike informally because all of them at one time or another had been issues in the several individual strikes that took place prior to the General Strike. I have already dealt with this aspect.

P.W. 245 Sh. Hassan Ali was in charge of the Labour Branch of the C.I.D. in Bombay from 1st March to 30th June, 1928. This witness gave his evidence from his notes which he says had been made at the time he was on duty from day-to-day. But mostly his reports were based on newspaper reports and cuttings. He has made mistakes about certain dates, which serve to show the unreliability of these records. The B.T.L. Strike Committee was not formed on 18th April as he says but on 19th as the Fawcett Committee has noted in its report. (Page 3).

The Joint Strike Committee was not formed on 27th or 28th April but on 2nd May (ibid, page 3).

On 27th April the Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson, showed tremendous "self-sacrifice and interest in the welfare of his subjects" by coming to Bombay from his summer resort at Mahabaleshwar. His coming to Bombay was nothing but one of those meaningless gestures of high Government officials, which are intended to make the people believe in their "personal goodness", while in actuality they are intended to bring about no results in favour of the people. His Excellency came to find out avenues of settlement. He interviewed the mill-owners at the Government Secretariat, the leaders of the Bombay Textile Labour Union and insignificant section of the G.K.M. which had split off under the leadership of Mr. Mayekar from the major body. On the day His Excellency arrived, our section sent a letter to him saying that no settlement arrived at without us would be acceptable to the strikers, as the largest section of them did not recognise the other unions. This was, as can be seen from the dates, done before the Joint Strike Committee—compromise was arrived at. His Excellency came and went and the strike continued as before. Though the Joint Strike Committee sent a letter of demands to the mill-owners and expressed willingness to negotiate on the basis of the draft, the mill-owners showed no desire to open negotiations. They began by opening a campaign of vilification and threats and spoke the language of warlords. They did not send any reply to the Joint Strike Committee and refused to recognise it. In reply to its letter of demands they sent directly to the press a communique embodying their answers to the workers' strike. They published their communiques in the press on May 3rd, 10th, 12th and 17th. The Joint Strike Committee replied to these statements in the press on May 11th and 21st. All these except the owners' statement of 3rd May were reprinted in a leaflet by the Committee (it is D 401). In the first place they categorically refused to accept any of the essential demands of the workers on the question of wage-cut, rationalisation, increased hours of work, fines, retrenchment, forfeiture of wages, ill-treatment and oppression of workers and victimisation. In the

second place they used the most insolent language towards the workers and their leaders. We have been blamed for using the language of "insolence" and hatred towards capitalists. It is perfectly justified. Those who abuse the workers every minute in the factory or the field cannot expect to be praised and addressed in a polite manner. In the third place the mill-owners showed an uncompromising determination to fight to the finish with their backs to the wall, as one of them put it. In their statement of May 10th they said: "What the Committee of the Association desire to make quite plain is that they are determined to carry out whatever reforms they believe to be absolutely necessary for the existence of the textile industry in Bombay irrespective of strikes" (D 401, page 9). On May 17th, they announced that they considered all the 150,000 workers of the industry as dismissed from work and that they would be re-engaged only if they unequivocally agreed to the terms formulated by the mill-owners. These terms were increased hours of work without increased pay, new standard rates of wages, retrenchment in all departments to the extent of 10 per cent and new system of disciplinary rules, fines etc. These were considered absolutely essential for the existence of the textile industry in Bombay and on 18th May 1928 the mill-owners were determined to carry them out. But this determination was broken on the rocks of proletarian determination against which it clashed. It is now December, 1931 and yet the industry exists without these absolute essentials which the workers are not going to allow in spite of determined onslaughts.

While referring in the press to the Joint Strike Committee's letter of demands, the mill-owners described the Committee as "certain people" who are outsiders to the industry but have entered Labour ranks to create trouble (D 401, page 22). Now the composition of the Joint Strike Committee is on record. It represented all the three Textile Unions in the industry. Among those "outsiders" sat Mr. N.M. Joshi, the member of the Royal Commission on Labour; there were members of Legislative Councils and Solicitors like Messrs. Asavale and Ginwalla. Now from our point of view it is not a very happy thing for the workers to have Solicitors and M.L.Cs. dominating their class action.

But these gentlemen were on the Committee on behalf of the B.T.L. Union and I am pointing out their names in order to show that the mill-owners were opposed to negotiating not only with the Communists and Left Trade Unionists but with "respectable genuine Trade Unionists" also. They bluffed the Governor and the public by saying that they would negotiate only with registered trade unions and as two of the unions in the Joint Strike Committee were not registered they could not negotiate with it. They were out to enhance the prestige of the Trade Union Law by compelling us to register. But that this was a bluff can be seen from the fact that though the B.T.L. Union of Mr. N.M. Joshi was registered the mill-owners had not recognised it and resented its "interference" in any dispute. The mill-owners were out to fight, not only Communists, but all Trade Unionists; they were out to enforce wage-cuts and rationalisation, and the result was prolongation of the dispute, as they hoped to win by starving out the workers.

On 15th May the General Member of the Government of Bombay, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, (Junior), came to Bombay to bring about a settlement. He interviewed the mill-owners and the Joint Strike Committee. The fact that there were Communists on the Strike Committee and that it was composed of unregistered trade unions did not prevent the Government's representative from negotiating for a settlement with us. But the morals of these owners of a national and *Swadeshi* industry were opposed to Communists more than those of the imperialist Government. The agent of the G.I.P. Railway, a Government concern had no scruples in talking to Bradley as a representative of the railwaymen. But the *Swadeshi* mill-owners refused to speak with us, in spite of the fact that many of us had fought in the ranks of the Congress in the days of 1920-22. The General Member's visit proved fruitless, "as the mill-owners could not agree to enter into any discussions with the Communist members of the Committee and the Strike Committee were equally adamant in adhering to the view that if a Round Table Conference were to be held at all, the Committee as a whole would nominate the members to it, and that they would not be dictated to in the matter by the owners.

(Fawcett Report, page 7). The All-India Trade Union Congress Bulletin of which Messrs N.M. Joshi, F.J. Ginwalla and R.R. Bakhale (editor) formed the Managing Committee and with which the Communists had no connection, wrote in its May number: "It has been plain from the tactic adopted by the mill-owners that they want the strike to be prolonged so that the workers can be starved into unconditional surrender". "The uncompromising and threatening attitude on the part of the mill-owners naturally led to a corresponding determination on the parts of the workers to continue the fight to a finish." (Exh. D 390, page 170).

**115. Mill-owners' plan of rationalisation in January—the Governor's speech and Mr. Joshi's reply—picketing troubles—the conflict of two duties of an Honorary Magistrate and strike leader**

It has been already stated that the mill-owners wanted the workers to come back according to the owners' new scheme of standardisation and retrenchment. It has also been stated on the mill-owners' behalf that before the General Strike they had no intention of and they did not resort to cutting the wages of workers or increasing their hours of work. But when the strike was forced on them, the mill-owners then formulated their terms. If there had been no strike they would not have on their own account disturbed the peace of the industry. But this contention has been proved to be false from the minute books of the Association which were placed before the Fawcett Inquiry Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay.

Therein it was found that the Association had appointed a Committee on standardisation on 6th January, 1928. Thus the standard scheme, and the wage-cuts and retrenchment embodied in it which were the cause of the General Strike and its subsequent prolongation were contemplated in a definite outline in January, three months before the strike. The first report of this Sub-Committee came before the mill-owners on 3rd May and criticisms were invited from the mills on 24th May 1928. Yet the mill-owners wanted the workers' consent to an almost non-

existent scheme on 10th May. The spinning scheme was discussed and many mill-owners opposed it on 5th June and yet they wanted the workers to agree to it on 10 May. The scheme was again altered on 7th June 1928 and adopted on 9th. The whole scheme including weaving was adopted by the Association on 23rd June. The proceedings also reveal that the mill-owners had decided to embody in the scheme a wage-cut of at least 12½ per cent, the basis being that the average wage of the weaver shall not be more than Rs. 42/-, whereas according to the Labour Office figures of Government it was Rs. 48/- in 1926. But when the workers denounced the scheme as one of wage-cuts pure and simple, under the guise of standardising wages from mill to mill the mill-owners denied that it contained a wage-cut, until the admission was forced by facts and figures later on. Thus the position till the end of May was that the mill-owners themselves were not ready with any satisfactory reply to the workers' demands. Their scheme of wages on which they wanted the workers to resume work did not get ready till the end of June and even when ready they did not know what the exact effects of it would be. They also refused to negotiate with the Joint Strike Committee though the General Member of the Government of Bombay had seen nothing wrong in negotiating with us.

It was the mill-owners thus who wanted the strike to prolong. It was not we who prolonged it.

In spite of this the Governor of Bombay from his privileged position delivered a speech at the Mahabaleshwar Club in which he attacked the militant leaders of the workers. It has been a hobby with the Governors and Governor-General to attack us in their dinner speeches and Lord Irwin went so far as to do it even when we were arrested and awaiting our trial. Sir Leslie Wilson in his speech said: "I cannot help saying that the responsibility for the mill strike and sufferings of the mill-hands rests entirely on the shoulders of those who made the workers leave their work whether they wished it or not—without giving the mill-owners an opportunity of even considering what the grievances of the men were." His Excellency also advised the workers very generously to follow rather the lead of men like Messrs N.M. Joshi and

Ginwalla (D 518, Times of India). But unfortunately for His Excellency the very men on whom he asked the workers to reply betrayed him. Mr. N.M. Joshi wrote to the press contradicting the above statement of Sir Leslie Wilson and regretted that His Excellency should have made such a statement. (Times of India, 26.5.78, D. 518). Referring to this chapter in the history of negotiations the Government of India have accepted in toto the version as given by the mill-owners. In their Annual Report to Parliament, India 1928-29, the Government of India have made a false statement with regard to the Strike Committee and its attitude towards negotiations. They say: "But during the first two weeks in May, though the mill-owners were willing to open negotiations with the officials of the Bombay Textile Labour Union (a registered body) they refused to have anything to do with the Joint Strike Committee as it was then constituted. The Joint Strike Committee on the other hand refused to allow the officials of the B.T.L. Union to carry on negotiations over their head" (page 10). It is absolutely false to say that the mill-owners were willing to negotiate even with the B.T.L. Union though it was registered. It is best to quote the President of that Union himself on this matter. Mr. N. M. Joshi says in a signed statement to the press: "If the intention of the Bombay Mill-owners' Association was to say that they would deal with the B.T.L. Union, they should have said that clearly instead of bringing in the consideration of registration. If their original object was to negotiate with the B.T.L. Union it has not only been frustrated but they have put that Union on the same level with a union which may have only a dozen members. Even His Excellency the Governor has been led into the same error on account of incompetent advice" (Bombay Chronicle 7/6/28, Ex. D 518). As regards the second statement in the above quoted Government Report the question of not allowing the B.T.L. Union to negotiate separately did not arise at all because after the union of all the three organisations into the Joint Strike Committee, the mill-owners never approached the B.T.L. or any other union singly for negotiations. The compiler of this report has been so accurate that while the August Conference was



held under the presidentship of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, he names Sir Cowasji Jehangir, who at that time was not a member of the Bombay Government at all.

The nationalist press and the Anglo-Indian newspapers which ordinarily fly at each other's throats on bourgeois patriotic issues joined hands against the workers in the campaign of vilification. There was not a single paper in Bombay that did not blame us and call upon the workers not to be "misled" by us. Every Congress and non-Congress paper mourned for the loss to the mill-owners and asked the starving workers to save the "national" industry. They spread false reports of our speeches and stories about fizzling out of the strike while the workers in fact were becoming more and more determined.

The Bombay bourgeoisie thus enlisted the services of the Governor, the General Member and the press to further its cause and break the strike. Having set up such influential propaganda machinery against us, they proceeded to use force and in this as usual they sought the aid of the police batons of Imperialism. The Commissioner of Police was requested to supply a special police force for the "protection of the mills". At every mill-gate a party of 5 to 10 policemen was stationed so that the blacklegs might muster courage to go in. When the workers posted their pickets, they were stopped from picketing though there was no law or ordinance prohibiting picketing at the time. A crisis arose on this question and we decided to vindicate our right of picketing by violating the orders of police officers not to picket (5-5-28). But before taking that step the Joint Strike Committee decided on 7th May, 1928 to send Messrs. N. M. Joshi and Asavale, curiously enough both of them Justices of Peace in the city of Bombay to the Commissioner of Police to talk over the matter. The Commissioner was convinced that prohibition of picketing was illegal and unwise and allowed it. Thus no necessity arose to test the right by disobeying the police orders. But after having allowed the pickets the police started trouble by harassing and arresting them for alleged disorderly behaviour, trespass, annoyance, and obstruction of traffic and such other sections of the law. By this

method our best workers and organisers were sent to jail or fined one by one. One such arrest created a very funny but very significant situation for a bourgeois member of the Strike Committee from the B.T.L. Union, Mr. Asavale, who was a member of the Legislative Council and a rich contractor was a member of the Strike Committee also on behalf of the B.T.L. Union. But he was also an Honorary Magistrate of Imperialism commissioned to administer His Majesty's law in spare time for no wages. It was a hard task for this man to reconcile his duty to His Majesty's law with his duty towards the workers, when one morning a strike picket was brought before him to be tried for disorderly behaviour. The picket straightway began to fraternise with the Magistrate, smiled with him familiarly and asked him to release him. The simple defence of the picket was that the Honorary Magistrate should recollect his experience as a strike leader how the workers are harassed and then judged why he was being brought there by the police. The poor strike leader and Magistrate was in a fix. Ultimately his sense of loyalty and fear of being criticised as being partial to the strikers led him to decide against the picket whom he fined Re. 1/- (Ex. D. 518 Times of India 26.5.28). It is said that next day, he himself paid that rupee to the picket. The contradictions of the servant of imperialist law and a humanitarian Trade Unionist lead to such results. He could pay Re. 1/- because it was only one man but had there been such thousand cases, the result would have been that the strike leader would have been overpowered by his duties as a Magistrate and he would have become the open saboteur of the strike. The workers understood this and therefore rightly demanded from their leaders unequivocal devotion to their class interest and complete severance of connections with the bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

The police, the press and all other forces of the imperialist State and the national bourgeoisie were hurled against the workers in their purely economic fight against wage-cuts and loss of employment. Yet the imperialists and the bourgeoisie tell the workers not "to dabble" with the question of political power

which fights them on all fronts at all times. We are asked not to mix economic with political questions. That is throwing dust in the eyes of the workers. Every big economic struggle is ultimately a political struggle and the workers even for a few rights and economic gains are compelled to fight political battles along with the everyday economic struggle.

**116. The Russian textile workers' help—the nationalist attack on this help—Municipal Corporation refuses relief—the exodus of 80,000 workers**

We had also to meet another attack, this time from the petty-bourgeois nationalist public and some pseudo-Trade Unionists. It was on the question of the money for relief received from the Russian Textile Unions. According to the Prosecution evidence, on 28th April 1928 dollars 7690 were sent by the Deutsche Bank Berlin acting on behalf of M. Vernoff to the Bombay Branch of the National City Bank of New York to be paid to Mr. S.H. Jhabwala, Vice President, Bombay Textile Labour Union (Exh. P 1542, P.W. 231). This telegram was received by the Bombay Branch on 30th April. In the usual course the bank makes an enquiry about the person and his credentials to receive the money. The Prosecution witness stated that he did not know who made the enquiry in this case. However on the same date the City Bank wired back that as Mr Jhabwala was not a Vice President of the B.T.L. Union fresh instructions were required. (Exh. 1543). It is to be noted that the bank did not say that they could not trace Mr. Jhabwala. It did not consult Mr. Jhabwala and there is reason to believe that it did not consult the B.T.L. Union, because Mr. Jhabwala was a Vice President of the B.T.L. Union when this telegram was received. Then why was such an obviously false telegram sent? The explanation is that probably the Government was afraid to give the money in the hands of a person who at that time was working on the lines a militant Left-Wing Trade Unionist and was still a member of the W.P.P. Allowing such a large sum to go to the strikers through a W.P.P. man meant helping

the W.P.P., the Communists and Trade Union radicals to consolidate their influence. The Joint Strike Committee with its "safety values" of moderates had not yet come into existence. The police and Government were yet undecided on their attitude. They wanted to take a chance with Vernoff and the Russian Trade Unions, whom they expected to withdraw the remittance after hearing that Mr. Jhabwala was not the Vice President of the B.T.L. Union. But Vernoff and the Russian Trade Unions valued the interest of the workers more than the name. They wanted to give relief to the workers no matter through whom it reached, if in the first instance it could not reach through a person who was nearer to the workers. On 7th May the Bank was instructed to pay the sum to Mr. N. M. Joshi, President of the B.T.L. Union and Government was confronted with the problem of the Soviet Trade Unions sending money to a "yellow man" for the relief of the workers. Meanwhile the Joint Strike Committee had come into existence. The two wings had united and Government played the tactic of making the Moderate group the financial arbiter of the strike by handing over the money on condition that it shall not be given into the hands of the W.P.P. men. On 9th May 1928 Mr. N.M. Joshi received Rs. 20,916-12-9 (P 1546) and it was given by instalments to the Joint Strike Committee for purchasing corn for relief of the workers. Every pie of the sum was spent on relief.

The next day the whole nationalist and imperialist press splashed full-page headlines like "Red Money for Bombay Strike" and "Bolshevik gold for Bombay Strikers". The bourgeoisie abused the Government for having allowed the money to pass on and the patriots fell foul of Mr. Joshi. Mrs. Besant from Madras denounced him and asked the excellent question "will the bond of sympathy thus established in a period of privation be allowed to weaken?" The answer to this will be given by the heroic working-class of India when the imperialists of the world will raise their armed hand against the workers' republic. Mr. C.F. Andrews gave an interview in Colombo in which he said that "he had no objection to receiving such money in times of distress, but to receive money from the Third

International for strike purposes was quite a different proposition. The Third International openly advocated violence and class-war and was opposed to constitutional Trade Unionism which it tried to wreck. Therefore he could not conscientiously welcome money from that quarter." (Colombo 30/5/28 Ex. D 518). This most truthful and Christian gentleman, the follower and prosperous biographer of another most truthful and Christlike gentleman, Mahatma Gandhi, started by telling the lie that the money was sent by the Third International. Secondly this man, who had dabbled with the most stubbornly fought Kharagpur Strike in 1927 and knew that strike had also received help from the Soviet Trade Unions now finds that times of distress and times of strike are not the same things, as if the workers on strike are less starved than those in famine! He made this distinction probably because he remembered that the Gujrat Flood Relief Committee had taken the help received from the Communist Party of Great Britain. (P. 1381). So to condemn receiving help from Communist sources at all times would have carried its own exposure. Thirdly this gentleman, who abhorred class-war, was himself paid by the Imperial Citizenship Association of Bombay, an organisation of the Indian bourgeois interests in Africa, to carry on incessant propaganda on their behalf to support the class-war between the White settlers and the Indian merchants and workers in Africa. Paid by the mill-owners of Bombay he was willing to wage the class-war of the Indian merchants against the Negroes and the White settlers, there in Africa, but in India he attributed the flaring up of class-war to the Third International and abhorred it!

D/- 11.12.31.

When Mrs. Besant had spoken against the money, her spiritual son Mr. Shiva Rao from Madras naturally followed suit. Still it must be said to the credit of Mr. N.M. Joshi, that he did not waver in his attitude towards this money. He gave an interview to the press that he was not opposed to receiving and using money from whatever source it came for the relief of the strikers. He stood for the right of the workers to receive help from the international

proletariat and asked the bourgeoisie whether it was not trading with Russia and receiving profits of red roubles. This interview silenced the storm for a time. It showed how the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and saints, apparently not belonging to the big bourgeoisie, all the same engaged in its class service and sabotaged the struggle of the workers and even aided the Imperialist Government in cutting off the help coming to them from the international working-class.

Another disillusionment came from the Bombay Municipal Corporation. This body is dominated by the mill-owners, the merchants and the petty-bourgeois voters paying rent of Rs. 10 and over. A resolution was brought before them that Rs. 100,000 be sanctioned for opening some relief work for the strikers. The resolution was lost. The workers were a bit surprised. In 1925 this Corporation had sanctioned a like sum, but in 1928 this was refused. Because in 1925 the Bombay bourgeoisie was using the strike to get the excise duty removed and had strong hopes of success; in 1928 it had no such hopes, and wanted the strike to be smashed outright. In 1925 the workers were not led in a manner that acted on clear cut class lines. At that time there was not much harm in giving relief. The workers who had come to look upon the Corporation as a body not entirely opposed to them as a class, speedily revised their viewpoint. They knew from this single act that the Corporation belonged to none but the bourgeoisie.

Thus by their own experience the workers saw that those middle-class layers who posed as pro-Labour and repudiated all suggestions that they too were a part of the bourgeoisie, were really chips from the same bourgeois bloc and in times of an acute class-struggle never forgot their parentage. The Imperialist State, the big bourgeoisie, the Police, the Municipal Corporation, the Nationalist and imperialist press and petty-bourgeois saints and breeders of World Teachers, all of them ranged themselves against the Bombay workers for the simple reason that they had refused to produce surplus value for the bourgeoisie. They saw the Marxian truth, "the emancipation of the working-class shall be its own task."

Accordingly the workers stiffened their attitude. They received

their outstanding wages and such of them as had homes or relations in the country left Bombay before the end of May. The Joint Strike Committee obtained concessions from the Co-operative Steam Navigation Company to the extent of 25 per cent. of the fares to the coast-line places. But no concession could be obtained from the railways. It was estimated that about 80,000 workers had left Bombay. Others were either completely proletarianised or had no means to go to their homes, which were far out on the railway lines.

#### **117. Making way for negotiations—registration of the Girni Kamgar Union**

However, we did not neglect to take steps to make the way of compromise easier. The mill-owners were not willing to negotiate with unregistered trade unions. They had given out this as an excuse for not negotiating with us. Because they expected that as some of us were Communists we would refuse to do anything that the mill-owners would want us to do and refuse to get our union registered under the law of the Government. But the mill-owners had misjudged in this respect. We were quite willing to have our union registered if that alone stood in the way of settlement. We were perfectly sure that the registration of our union would not remove the difficulties at all. So when this excuse was very much relied upon as the real difficulty in the way, during our talks with the General Member of the Government of Bombay, we immediately proceeded to get the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal registered. The name of the G.K.M. since the split between the Secretary and the President was used by both the factions. When we went to the Registrar's office to get it registered we found that the former Secretary had already registered the name for his faction (24th May) and the Registrar could not re-register it in our name (P.W. 245). This was a difficulty of first rate importance and caused a serious crisis amongst the group of those organisers who were so long working under the banner of the Mahamandal. They had cherished the Mahamandal since 1923. It had grown in the General Strike of 1924. It had fought through the 1925 strike and now they were asked to surrender and bury that name in the midst

of the third General Strike, simply because some dirty law had registered that name for a handful of persons opposed to the General Strike while the real flower of the G.K.M. was in the full swing of the strike. A mere trick of law and of the Registrar, they said, was not going to deprive them of those traditions and the credit of the work of the last five years. If they were out to fight the powerful bourgeoisie they could as well neglect this trick of the law and go without it and stick to the Mahamandal as their own and nobody else's. It was the simple logic of the worker, who was not willing to surrender the name and register under another simply to please the mill-owners and open a way for negotiations. For two days the fight went on. We suggested that a new union be formed and registered. If we were the real workers of the Mahamandal it mattered very little who carried away the name, so long as the true traditions and the workers remained with us. We would remain the same powerful body if we worked vigorously and would create the same respect, credit and leadership for the new union. When ultimately the leading workers were won over to the idea of taking up a new name another difficulty arose over the question of admission of "non-workers" in the union. The Mahamandal had special provision in its constitution that no non-worker shall be admitted into the union and the leading workers were brought up in that idea. The reason why the Mahamandal had made such a rule is shown in a handbill issued by it (P. 1462). It was a reaction to the tricks practised upon the workers by the petty-bourgeois persons that had entered trade unionism to make a career. It was a repetition in a sense of the famous reaction of the French proletariat to the betrayal practised upon it by the Second International Socialist leadership, when Clemenceau took ministership under the bourgeois Government. The French proletariat as a result of that betrayal began to hate politics and the Communists had to fight out this wrong tendency. Similar was the case with the Mandal. They distrusted all petty-bourgeois trade unionists and distrusted us also for a time, even though they had made us their advisers. Now when they had been persuaded to form a new union they wanted to repeat the example of the



Mandal and exclude us from it. We had to fight this tendency also, because it is historically necessary for the working-class to use the services of the revolutionary petty-bourgeois who make common cause with the proletariat and work for the working-class on the basis of the programme of proletarian class power. Such a petty-bourgeois intellectual unites in him all the advantages of the bourgeoisie, of which the working-class is deprived, with the revolutionary class theory of the proletariat. And as such the distrust entertained by the workers against the petty-bourgeoisie as a class,—though quite healthy and necessary in its class-struggle,—must not be applied to each and every individual of that class without any reference to the character and ideology of the individual concerned. That would hamper the development of the party of the proletariat. Apart from these general considerations the immediate consideration was that unless we were officially in the new union we would not be in a position to control the strike and the negotiations as we would have no effective voice in the official deliberations of the union. The position was explained to the workers, and the opposition which was limited only to a small group of the G.K.M. Managing Committee was overcome mainly because they knew that if they rejected us the rank and file stood with us to whom we could appeal over their heads. The Bombay Girni Kamgar Union was formed in a workers' meeting at Nagu Sayaji Wadi on 22nd May 1928 and was registered the next day with a membership of 174 and a cash balance of Rs. 43-8-0. (Exh: P. 958 Minute Book of the G.K.U). About the same time Mr. Jhabwala got the Mill-Workers' Union registered, while the B.T.L. Union was already a registered body. Thus the Joint Strike Committee now consisted of three registered unions. The fourth one, the Mahamandal, was opposed to the General Strike, and had split away from the main body of the workers and was not therefore admitted to the Joint Strike Committee. The new G.K.U. office-bearers were:—President—A.A. Alwe, Vice Presidents—Bradley, Nimbkar, Jhabwala and Tamhanekar, General Secretary—myself (S.A. Dange), Joint-Secretaries—Satum, Tawde and K.N. Joglekar; Joint-Treasurers—B.T. Alve and S.V. Ghate. Later on Jhabwala

resigned and G.R. Kasle was elected in his place (25.10.28) and Mirajkar was elected Joint-Secretary vice Satum resigned (25.10.28) (Exh.: P. 958). The G.K.M. has contributed 9 of its 13 office-bearers to this case.

**118. Pandit Malaviya's visit and our "sins"—Khilafat Committee's communal help rejected—The Police arrest me and Nimbkar—mill-owners open talks in June**

About 25th of May, I was surprised one day to receive a verbal call from Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to see him in connection with the strike. I think he also called one or two other members of the Strike Committee. About this visit one incident happened which illustrates our ideas of forming alliances in the matter of the class-struggle. When I was informed of Panditji's desire I asked if besides myself and other members, Mr. Joshi also, was informed, because it was generally understood in the Strike Committee that if any negotiations were to be carried on, representatives of both the wings of the Committee should be present. I was told that Pandit Malaviya would not like to have Mr. Joshi in the Conference chiefly for the reason that he was a Moderate in politics (think of Pandit Malaviya saying that !) and did not co-operate with the Swarajists and other nationalists in the Assembly. This had reference to the voting on the 18 pence controversy and the protectionist measures brought before the Assembly. I told the intermediary that no negotiations or any important step in that behalf could be taken without the presence of the representative of the B.T.L. Union. Moreover, if in bourgeois politics Mr. Joshi did not side with the bourgeois Swarajist Reformists on a particular issue, specifically limited to their class, there was no reason why we should not co-operate with him on the Trade Union front for the time that he was standing by the class-struggle that was being waged in the General Strike. Of course as Communist we would do away with both bourgeois and Trade Unionist Reformists, but in the given situation and when it came to a choice between the two,

we preferred to co-operate with Mr. Joshi, the Trade Union Reformist, who first opposed the General Strike but stood by it when once it was on, than with the bourgeois Reformists with their phrase-mongering about the welfare of the masses. I should however make it clear that I am referring here to Mr. N.M. Joshi of 1928. When Pandit Malaviya was informed of this he sent for Mr. Joshi also. A small conference was held in Mr. Birla's house at Sandhurst Road, Bombay, where Mrs. Naidu and a few Congressmen were also present, and the workers' side was explained to them. We told them how wages were being cut and hours of work increased and rationalisation introduced. We told them that though we were willing to negotiate the strike, the mill-owners were insolently refusing. Panditji promised to place our case before some of the mill-owners and probably did so. To our surprise when he met us next day he started quite a new song. He gave a long lecture on the losses of the industry and asked us how much reduction in wages we were prepared to accept. This was an astonishing proposition. We refused point blank to talk about any wage-cut at all. Then from wage-cuts the Pandit jumped to the relief of the strikers. He said that it was necessary to arrange some help for them. We of course agreed. Then with a pious expression he told us that it was sinful to accept Russian money for that purpose. He entered into the history of the Russian Revolution, the massacre of the landlords and princes, the confiscation of their property and so on. Now we had no time to teach Panditji the history of the Russian Revolution. But we respectfully pointed out to him that on the point of accepting "sinful money" Panditji was a greater sinner than ourselves. The most pious Hindu University was built on the donations of princes, the list of whose hideous sins was famous throughout the world. If the holy Shankracharya for heavy fees could perform the conversion and marriage ceremony of a dethroned prince, who dared a murder for a concubine, if "Mr. A" could spend millions of the peasants' taxes for a scandal in London and if the donations of such men could not be sinful for the Pandit why should the money sent by the revolutionary Proletariat of Russia to feed the starving workers in

India be considered sinful? If they had massacred princes and confiscated their property, it was the will of the whole working-class and peasantry, it was the revolutionary action of the whole people against the exploiting handful and as such historically justified for their social progress. The tidal laws of revolutions are more profound and greater than those of the knee-deep pools of Benares. We did not see why we should reject their help on the grounds shown by the Pandit. Such a reply naturally exasperated Pandit Malaviya and we did not hear about him again in the strike.

While on the one side we had to firmly justify the taking of help from one quarter, we were called upon on principle to reject help from another quarter. The Khilafat Committee of Bombay sent to the Joint Strike Committee a letter saying that they had collected Rs. 27/- which they wanted to give for relief of the Mohammedan workers and wanted the Committee to appoint three Muslim mill-strikers to distribute relief in the Muslim quarters. This was an insidious attempt to import Hindu-Muslim distinctions amongst the workers and we had to be particularly careful about it. It was communal reservation in another form and acceptance of such a proviso in the relief distribution would have meant a recognition of communal and such other claims in the Trade Unions. We had no objection to take money from the Khilafat Committee but we objected to its being reserved for Mohammedan workers. It must be remembered that the Joint Strike Committee was composed of workers of all castes and religions, of Hindu and Muslim workers. They unanimously rejected the condition and refused the money, if it was to be accompanied by that condition (20.5.28); and the Khilafat Committee was informed accordingly. The class solidarity of the workers proved greater than the considerations of communal gain.

After the failure of the police to break the strike by firing, just when it had started, their attention was turned towards the pickets. Because the imprisonment, fines and beating of pickets did have not any effect, so they turned their attention to those whom they considered as particularly useful to the workers at that moment. On 31st May two blacklegs were caught by the workers while

going into the mills at 4 in the morning. They were taken to the Nagu Sayaji Wadi for being put before the meeting as specimens of blacklegs. It appears that in the interval between the meeting and their "arrest" their faces were besmeared with black soot and when I went to the meeting early that day I found them sitting in the meeting. They were brought before me by some workers and I was asked to deal with them. I explained to them what blacklegging meant and how it was a treachery to thousands of workers. Then they were told to go away. It appears that the police who were all along watching this, followed them and persuaded them to register a complaint of intimidation, assault and wrongful confinement which they did. The next day in the morning on 1st June 1928 at the Joint Strike Committee meeting in the Damodar Thackersey Hall I was arrested on the basis of that complaint and taken to the police lock-up. An identification parade was held but the two complainants did not identify me as the man against whom they had the complaint. I was released on bail and the police proceeded with their investigation. After a few days they arrested two workers on the same charge and put us all three for trial. In the meanwhile the two complainant workers had compounded the cases and withdrawn the complaint. Thus the efforts of the police failed.

The second attempt was made on Nimbkar. A meeting of the members of the B.B.C.I. Ry. Union was being held, in the same D.T. Hall where C.I.D. reporters claimed entry by right, which was resisted by the workers assembled and the reporters were asked to leave the meeting. As they refused to leave, the meeting was dissolved (4.7.28). As a result of this Nimbkar was arrested on 6th July for "an assault on a public servant" and prosecuted. Unfortunately for the police on the evidence given the Magistrate held the offence to be merely technical and he was fined Rs. 50/-. Thus again the game of sabotaging the strike failed (3.7.28) (Exh. P. 1744).

In the matter of negotiations, after the registration of our Union and Malaviya's abortive talks, thousands of workers left Bombay and the strike 'stiffened' more. The mill-owners first refused to

speak with us on the ground that we had not a registered union. Now when the Unions were registered they objected to the Union's forming a Joint Strike Committee. It was such a foolish attitude that Mr. N.M. Joshi wrote to the press on 7th June 1928 saying: "It is my duty to point out to the public in Bombay how the Bombay Mill-owners' Association once having either foolishly or out of a spirit of mischief adopted a wrong attitude are obstinately sticking to it, thus prolonging the dispute which is doing good neither to them nor even to the mill workers". After pointing out how the mill-owners avoided negotiations with the B.T.L. Union which was registered long before the strike and how in order to remove the minor difficulties the Strike Committee had its constituent unions registered, Mr. Joshi asked the mill-owners if they meant business or humbug. In fact there was no need for the question. The mill-owners were clearly humbugging because they had no basis of negotiations, no standard scheme with them, which they were asking the workers to adopt even before it was ready and they had to agree amongst themselves, as it was quite evident from their minutes of meetings in June already referred to.

As all attempts to break the strike by force failed and the standard scheme was got ready in some form, the Association asked the Joint Strike Committee Unions to meet them in a conference. The Committee elected a Negotiations Committee of six which met the Mill-owners' Committee on 9th June. The strike had started on April 16th and was complete on 26th. Thus the mill-owners had taken more than 12 months to open preliminary talks with the workers' Trade Unions. Can such a state of affairs be found in any ordinary bourgeois democratic country? It is this trait of Capitalism and Imperialism that makes even the trade union struggle of colonial workers most bitter and prolonged. When we met the Mill-owners' Committee, we found them full of anger and insolence. They were under the impression of meeting those types of men they had seen in the previous general strikes, who believed more in the parliamentary language, its meaningless polish and a policy of not "exasperating" the

mill-owners. Moreover the mill-owners had still hopes of breaking the strike by force and starvation. On the first day there was mutual recrimination, charges and counter charges. Then we were given copies of their scheme of standardised wages. The mill-owners gave us to understand that by their scheme of wages in spinning they had made no saving to the industry, on the contrary they had given increases in wages. Their weaving scheme was not ready which they gave later on. With regard to weaving also they emphatically denied that there was any wage-cut on the whole. They maintained that a few rates had been brought down because they were high, but as a whole the scheme represented no wage-cut. The mill-owners wanted to fool us into believing this because they knew that there was no textile expert amongst us who would analyse the scheme and expose the wages-cut hidden in the complicated technique of that scheme. Amongst the mill-owners themselves the scheme was the product of two or three persons the chief amongst them being Mr. F. Stones of the Sassoon group. Though at the beginning we could not find where and how the wage-cut was hidden, yet our class outlook and the understanding of the capitalist system had convinced us that the mill-owners would not undertake such a trouble unless they profited by it. With the statistics that were available to me I undertook to go through the scheme in detail. We also held conferences with the mill-owners in order to get explanations from them of their own figures. The conferences sat on 9th, 11th, 16th, 19th and 26th June 1928. The mill-owners eluded all attempts to show the exact reduction in the number of workers and the percentage of the wage-cut. However we made a statement that more than 10,000 persons would be retrenched under the scheme and weavers' wages would be cut to the extent of 20 per cent. I personally was not definite as to the exact extent of the wage-cut. But my investigations showed that it might have been anywhere between 20 and 30 per cent but certainly not less than 20 per cent. The mill-owners first simply laughed over the statement and they could well afford to do that because they had

the pride of having on their side textile experts who had been in the industry for thirty years, while my studies, with the help of the intelligent workers in the Union, had not been more than three months old. But I had this advantage which the mill-owners can never have. I could consult the workers in each and every mill about their actual earnings, output, the nature of production, the state of machinery and the composition of materials. This information could not be available to the mill-owners because of their internal competition. Each mill-owner was the competitor of the other though for the purpose of the strike all were united. And none of them would allow the other to consult his costing sheets and layout on the ground of trade secrets. When the mill-owners were given the challenge to prove that our statement was not correct, they gave up the talk of further negotiations or amending the scheme. The negotiations fell through on 26th June.

When the negotiations fell through the mill-owners issued a communique to the press explaining the basis of their standard scheme (1.7.28). They said that it embodied "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work". Now the strikers were not concerned with such vague and propagandist definitions of the standard scheme. They were working on a definite contract of rupees, annas and pies for a certain amount of work under certain definite conditions. We showed that the scheme was effecting a cut of 20 per cent in one case, a retrenchment of over 10,000 men in another case. The mill-owners avoided a clear answer to this. They repudiated the idea of a direct wage-cut. They said that the scheme as containing a demand of increased efficiency from the workers was the alternative to a wage-cut. Such language was alright for the ignorant to consume, who did not know the technique. Increased work for the same wage is called efficiency by the capitalists. The workers cannot be "efficient" in that sense. Efficiency also means retrenchment and unemployment of the workers. The workers cannot accept "efficiency" of this sort however much that body called "public opinion" which today means bourgeois opinion, may like that word.



**119. Relief begun—attempt to open mills under armed protection in August—The Hidayatullah Conference and its failure (15.8.28)**

The Joint Strike Committee had decided to start distribution of relief from June 12th i.e. two months after the commencement of the strike. It had on hand Rs. 32,000/- for that purpose. At first there were ten centres which later on were increased to fourteen. By 9th June Rs. 15,000/- had been spent, leaving about two weeks' rations on hand. In the Municipal Corporation another attempt was made to procure relief and a resolution to spend Rs. 1,000/- daily for relief of the strikers was brought before it. But as expected, it was shelved to a committee for report. This committee reported against the proposal. Their report was discussed in the Corporation on 9th July and all proposals made therein were thrown out. When the proposals were being discussed a meeting of the strikers was held before the Corporation Hall. The Hall is situated in thoroughly bourgeois quarters which had never seen such a mass of workers nor had the workers ever visited these quarters. There are two Bombays, one of the bourgeoisie and one of the proletariat. We brought our Bombay to have a look at the bourgeois Bombay, built on the profits of the toiling workers. The two Bombays faced each other and between them stood the Imperialist armed police for the help of the bourgeoisie, which was abusing the proletariat from its shelter in the Corporation Hall behind the imperialist arms. It was a vivid proof of the counter-revolutionary nature of the Bombay bourgeoisie.

We had spent on relief very large sums at the beginning which was unwise. It was due to the fact that we ourselves did not expect that the strike would last so long. When the negotiations broke down, we were hard pressed for relief money, because as many as 30,000 men and women were asking for it. We had, therefore, to cut down the amount, which was brought down to Rs. 4,000/- per week. The centres of distribution were reduced to seven from 11th July 1928. (Kranti 8th July.) A vigorous campaign to get help from the Unions in other industries had to be undertaken as a

result of which the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union gave Rs. 1,000/-, the Bombay Port Trust Union Rs. 200/-, the G.I.P. Railway Employees' General Union Rs. 200/- and the Bombay Tramwaymen's Union Rs. 50/ (Kranti 12.7.28.) Volunteer bands were sent to go round for collections in the city. The police followed the volunteers and when the shopkeepers and others were inclined to give money they were asked not to give it. The petty shopkeepers were on the whole not enthusiastic all to pay and when they got the warning of the police, they would certainly not dare to pay. We also held meetings in the petty-bourgeois areas to collect money for relief and explain the case of the strikers. It was a time when the petty-bourgeoisie in Bombay was roaring loudly in support of the Bardoli Peasants' Satyagraha and the bourgeoisie had opened its purse for the bourgeois leaders of the peasants. But for the workers in Bombay when a meeting was held, the expenses of the Hall came to Rs. 14/- while the collections amounted to Rs. 19/-, the grand sum of petty-bourgeois support to the Bombay workers

D/- 12.12.31

Thus June and July saw the failure of negotiations through Government and directly with the mill-owners, failure to enlist the sympathy of the petty-bourgeois public and failure to secure help from the capitalist Municipality. This development strengthened the class-consciousness of the workers and taught them again that the emancipation of the working-class shall be its own task. The workers carried on their fight with determination and refused to accept wage-cuts and retrenchment.

When the mill-owners saw that of their own accord the workers would not assume work, they planned a big offensive in August, with the help of the police, military and the press. The European Chamber of Commerce, the Share-brokers' Association, the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, all called for vigorous action to end the strike. The vigour was not to be shown in granting the workers' demands but in a big offensive to break the strike. Mr. H. Sawyer, the Deputy Chairman of the mill-owners and a prominent member of the European Chamber and Mr. Tairsee, at that time presiding over the Annual Meeting of

the Indian Chamber, spent much vigour in denouncing the Communists and asked the Government to take strong action. The Indian Nationalist Press in Bombay also agreed. Accordingly the mill-owners published a plan to reopen the mills group by group in seven instalments. Police help was requisitioned on a large scale and the first experiment was fixed for 6th August 1928. (List and dates in D 524.) The workers were asked to resume work on the wages as given in the owners' scheme. The Strike Committee in reply to this drew out a scheme of intense picketing, which was no longer left to the volunteers alone. Each member of the Strike Committee was given personal charge of picketing on a number of mills from the group to be opened on a particular day. The picketing time was changed to 4 in the morning when the police force was ordered to be at the mill gates. 50 mounted police, 50 armed police and 200 ordinary police were the strength put at the disposal of the owners. With the help of such a force the gates of 11 mills were opened at the usual time and the sirens whistled. But to the discomfiture of the bourgeoisie and the Government, not a single worker turned up. The cavalry paraded through the lanes and by-lanes to restore courage into the "intimidated workers", but the workers smiled at them from their chawls. The police found them quietly cleaning their teeth, while amusedly studying with black powder in hand the crestfallen cavalry passing up and down. Not only did the workers not go to work but even those blacklegs who had kept going into the mills to do sweeping and a bit of cleaning here and there did not turn up. The attempt stiffened the strike rather than break it. After a trial of 8 days the mill-owners decided to give up the show. The Commissioner of Police expressed his unwillingness to continue the supply of the police force since there appeared to be no necessity for it. Thus ended the big armed offensive, the attempt of the bourgeoisie to give protection to the textile workers against the "intimidation" of Communists and help them come to work. The working-class in Bombay proved the bourgeoisie to be a liar; it proved that not by intimidation but by voluntary decision they had refused to accept the axe on their wages, and that the Communist leaders only carried out their will.

On 8th August a resolution was moved in the Bombay Legislative Council asking the Government to appoint a Conciliation Board for the strike. The Government agreed to call a joint conference of the mill-owners and the Joint Strike Committee to ascertain if they would agree to submit the dispute to a Conciliation Board. Accordingly a conference was convened presided over by the Hon'ble General Member, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. The Hon'ble Sir Ghulam Hussain was not an impartial President, a role which he wanted to assume before the public. He is a gentleman who has made himself quite "famous" by having bought lands in the Sukkur Barrage area of Sind, when he was the General Member of the Bombay Government and therefore in a position to know which lands would fetch better price by reason of Government operations on the Barrage. He was openly charged in the Bombay Council with having used his position to buy lands cheaply and in an advantageous area. Such was the gentleman we had now to deal with as President for bringing about "conciliation" between the bourgeoisie and the workers. Once on May 15, a mill-owner, in the garb of a Government Minister, had the audacity to impose himself upon the strike as an impartial conciliator. Now we were offered a feudal landholder who owed this ministership to the mill-owners' and landholders' support. That is how the bourgeoisie assumes a thousand roles, and hides the class nature of its operations by getting them carried out through the so-called third party or impartial agents. The conference was held, and a Committee was agreed to, which would consider and report upon the standard scheme and the worker's demands. Suddenly the mill-owners sprang a surprise on us in the midst of the conference by asking us as to when we would call off the strike. Now this question was not expected to crop up, as relying on the experience of 1924, when the calling off the strike was not a condition precedent to resumption of work, we did not expect the mill-owners or the President who supported the proposal to raise it. However, the raising of that question was not so important as the question of wages that would be paid in the period till the Committee reported. The mill-owners wanted to leave that

question also to the Committee which would be appointed. This we rejected. Then they proposed to pay to the weavers the standard scheme wages which was the subject-matter of the dispute, with an increase of about 11 per cent on the scheme wages of the weavers in the first month,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent in the second and in the third, the workers to work on the scheme as it was. This, of course, could not be accepted because we had held that the scheme represented 20 to 30 per cent cut in weavers' wages besides the retrenchment in spinning and increased hours of work in other departments. We proposed that in the first place we would not like to call off the strike before the report of the Committee was out. In the alternative if the strike was to be called off, then we could go back to work only on the pre-cut wages and conditions of 1925. To this the mill-owners would not agree. The impartial landlord President even threatened us that such a behaviour on our part would bring disaster; he did not say exactly what kind it would be. We said that we must consult the whole Strike Committee on such an important issue. At this statement, a derisive laughter greeted us from the other side. Had we not plenipotentiary powers to settle the strike, were we not the virtual dictators? If the Strike Committee had not complete faith in us or we had not complete faith in ourselves, why had we come at all to negotiate with such incomplete powers?—were some of the questions hurled at us. It would have been a deadly thrust at the petty-bourgeois vanity in us had we not been fortified by the idea of complete subordination of individuality to the will of the rank and file. We could not go beyond our mandate, and consultation with the rank and file was the safest guide, especially in a situation when two wings of the Trade Union Movement were united in a strange wedlock on such a mighty issue. We refused to be taken in by flattery, derision or threat. Our simple reply was that the plenipotentiaries of the biggest bourgeois States while in the conference chamber carry a megaphone in their sleeves, which continually delivers to them their Masters' Voice from the finance syndicates. The bourgeois hireling plenipotentiaries hide the master of the voice from the world in their stiff collars and ample sleeves. But the leadership of the proletariat is never ashamed to openly avow that every-thing that it does has to be done according to the voice of the rank and file.

The conference was adjourned. We consulted the Strike Committee which expressed itself against the calling off the strike during the inquiry period unless the wage-cut and 1925 conditions were restored. Next day, 16th August, this was communicated to the conference. The mill-owners then withdrew their consent to an Inquiry or Conciliation Committee. Their game was clear. They wanted to get the strike called off, put the workers on the standard scheme of 20 per cent cut and then throw over the Committee into the dustbin. But they failed in this tactic altogether. There was no reason for the mill-owners to reject our proposals except that they still hoped to smash the strike by prolonging it. The Communists did not stand to gain by prolongation. The mill-owners accepted in the October settlement almost in toto what we had proposed at the August Conference. Even if they had accepted our alternative proposal for the Committee to work and the strike to continue, the results would have been the same as they were afterwards, except perhaps in the matter of the verdict of the Committee. The Fawcett Committee took 29 full-day and 18 half-day sittings to complete its work, i.e. 38 full working days or about 7 weeks. If it had been appointed at the August Conference, and the strike continued, it would have finished its work in October. By rejecting the proposals also the strike lasted till October. Thus whether on the question of demands or the duration of the strike the mill-owners derived no gain by rejecting the proposals in August.

#### **120. Mill-owners' admission about wage-cut—the Assembly letter—the Mayor fund**

Just about the beginning of August we scored another victory over the mill-owners. Since the publication of their scheme and throughout their negotiations with us and public propaganda, the mill-owners had refused to admit that their standard scheme did not only standardise wages for the same class of work as between mill and mill but it also retrenched men, saved a lot on spinning wages (which they claimed to have raised), and effected an absolute cut in the weavers' wages. When they put up the rates of wages on the mill gates in July we explained to the workers that

the scheme contained 20 to 30 per cent cut for the weavers. The mill-owners could not hold long to their falsehood in front of our figures and calculations, and more because of the fact that they themselves were ignorant of the actual effect of the scheme. At last, in August the Deputy Chairman in exasperation admitted that the scheme did cut  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent wages. The whole fraudulent game of hiding the cut thus began to collapse. Then another mill-owner Mr. Usman Subhani declared that they did not know what the cut was but he thought it to be between 5 and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. I seized these two pronouncements and wrote to the press exposing the falsehood of the mill-owners' claims. Therein I still stuck to my 20 per cent estimate. Later on, when negotiations were resumed with the owners, many of them in their individual capacity confessed to their utter ignorance of the scheme. This was not surprising to us because even the bourgeois Tariff Board in its report had said: "Of the 175 Directors of the mills in Bombay there are only 11 who have received practical training." It is quite natural. In modern industrial Capitalism, all the work of production and distribution is socialised and carried on by the workers and a hierarchy of salaried officials and experts. The capitalist is in no way connected with these processes. He only cuts coupons and pockets the profits. This illustrates how the whole system can run without the capitalists and is ripe for socialism.

In the further negotiations the mill-owners modified their peremptory orders to the workers to accept the scheme as it was. Mr. S. D. Saklatwala, the Chairman of the Association was more courageous than the Deputy Chairman and said before the Fawcett Committee: "Our original standard scheme was based on a cut of about 11 per cent" (D. 523, page 10) and then added, "I hope to convince you that a cut not of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent but at least of 30 per cent would be fully justifiable in the weaving section." (Ibid.) If they considered it fully justifiable can anyone, knowing the bourgeoisie, believe that they did not incorporate it in the scheme or that they took pity on the workers? Were we then wrong in our estimate of 20 per cent? Still the mill-owners held very fast to one of their lies that they had increased wages in the

spinning and that they gained nothing in that department. On this point it took more than a year to force the partial truth out of them. Their Chairman giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Labour on 30th November 1929 admitted that they gained 2 per cent in spinning also. But in this even they introduced some amount of falsehood. Before lunch time Mr. Mody, the Chairman of the Association said before the Commission: "The standard scheme has nothing to do with reduction of workers." After lunch the same day Mr. S. D. Saklatwala, the Chairman of the previous year said: "Under the scheme there would be a reduction of 2,000 doffer boys and the industry would profit to the extent of 2 per cent." In this evidence the question of reduction in other departments is skilfully omitted and naturally of profits from retrenchment. I put the figure at 10,000 which meant a saving of 6 p.c. in the wages bill by retrenchment alone. The refusal of the mill-owners till August to tell openly to the workers that their wages were cut was deliberate dishonesty, to which they could not hold consistently to the end simply because of our vigilance and our intense efforts to know and study the scheme and its technique, in order that we may not reject it on suspicion only but after knowing thoroughly the reduction of wages and men it proposed to carry out. The admission of the mill-owners was forced out of them by our studies and determination, and that made the issue of the strike clearer for all. It was henceforth admitted on all sides a question of wage-cuts and retrenchment and no longer of a mere scheme of standardised wages.

Two days after the failure of the negotiations in Bombay, the Government of India released for publication on 18th August the famous "Assembly Letter", now Ex. P. 377(1) in this case. It caused quite a sensation in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois world and was intended, as subsequent events show, as preliminary to overtures of an alliance with the nationalist bourgeoisie against the workers' movement. But the letter had no effect whatever on the workers. On the very day of its publication we explained to the workers the implications of this tactic of the Government that it was intended to rouse the Indian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois against the Communists in particular and



against all militant working-class movements in general. That the publication was intended to smash the leadership of the strikes, cripple whatever petty-bourgeois sympathies there were for the working-class movement, and create an atmosphere favourable for a strong offensive against the working-class leadership on an all-India scale could be seen from the leading articles of the whole bourgeois press in India, and from the fact that seven days after this, on August 25th, the Gazette of India published the proposed Public Safety Bill moved in the Assembly on 4th September 1928. The leading article in the Evening News of Bombay of 20th August 1928 said (Ex. D 518): "Comrade Roy's letter, if anything, reveals something more of the secret force behind all the labour troubles. One of the leaders of the millhands and railway workshop employees in Bombay is in correspondence with the League against Imperialism, an organisation brought into being under Moscow auspices and which acts as a sort of post office for the Communist International. Let us admit at once that it is not a crime merely to correspond with Moscow directly or indirectly. It may be that Mr. Jhabwala has simply asked for more financial help to the Bombay strikers or kicking against some of the conditions under which the C.I. would give additional funds." The article further points out that the C.I. is not out for philanthropic help. It wants return for its money in the form of a Red Revolution in India, which is revealed by the Roy's letter. "Moscow means business" is the conclusion in the article. Anyone can see from this how exactly the Prosecution is repeating almost word for word what is written in this article of 1928. It would be difficult to say whether it is a part of the leading article of an evening paper in Bombay or the address of the Crown Counsel in this case. Not only that. A statement has been made before the Hon'ble High Court by Mr. Kemp to the effect that the poor and most amicable gentlemen of the C.I.D. were hard-worked for full four years in unearthing the correspondence of the prisoners here. Yet here we find an evening daily quoting from the "most secret" correspondence of one of these terrible conspirators, and the astounding and terrible discovery sought to be proved in this case that the League against Imperialism is a

subsidiary of the Comintern was known to an evening daily in Bombay and published by it as far back as August 1928. So it would be an interesting question whether the overworked C.I.D. was running this paper or the paper running the C.I.D. and preparing in advance the outlines of the Crown Counsel's Address. But the performance on the Roy's Letter was not thought sufficient. The same paper on the same day, and perhaps others of its family also, published a garbled summary of comrade Kusinenn's speech on the question of the agrarian revolution in India and the role of the Communists in it.

This outburst of activity on the part of Government was not going to affect our line of action, because ours was not a conspiratorial activity which demands a change of line according to the fact whether or not the Government has come to know of it. The end of the strike depended solely on the question whether the mill-owners withdrew the cuts and retrenchment, and not on the question whether the so-called plans of the C.I. to be worked through the strike were known to the Government and the bourgeoisie. We were prepared to compromise if the wage-cut was withdrawn or to go on as before, if it was not. In such an atmosphere the Mayor of Bombay Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, one of the leading and rich surgeons of Bombay, called a conference of the representatives of the Strike Committee, the mill-owners, merchants, share-brokers and such others, in the Corporation Hall of Bombay. It may be remembered that the Corporation as such had shown itself definitely hostile to the strike. In June it had rejected the proposal of Rs. 1,00,000/- for relief to the strikers. On July 9th it had thrown out a proposal of Rs. 1,000/- daily relief to the strikers or their children. In such conditions it looked a bit curious that the President of the Corporation should come forth to work for the settlement of the strike. He started unofficially a Relief Fund for the children of the strikers on 12th July, 1928 called the Mayor's Relief Fund for children. The suggestion for it had come during the debate on 9th July, when the grant of relief to the strikers was rejected. The subscribers to his fund were most of them mill-owners and big share-brokers. The total collections of this fund amounted to Rs. 48,995-12-0. This sum was collected

from only 134 subscribers, giving Rs. 365/- per subscriber. But this does not give an adequate idea of the class of the subscribers. Sir Victor Sasoon gave Rs. 10,000/-, Sir Fazalbhoy gave Rs. 5,000/- and Raja Partabgirji of the Prahlad Mills gave Rs. 5,000/-. Thus three of the textile mill-owners alone gave Rs. 20,000/-. Mr. R. Birla gave Rs. 1,500/-. Then ten of them contributed Rs. 10,004/- that is Rs. 1,000/- and odd each. In this category are found His Excellency the Governor of Bombay, the Mayor himself, Mr. Sasakura of the Toyo Podar Mills, and the Native Share and Stock Brokers' Association, the remaining five being of the big ring of share-brokers on the Exchange. The third category paid Rs. 500/- and odd, and consisted of 16 subscribers making up Rs. 8,006/-. Thus 30 persons out of 134 made up an amount of Rs. 40,000/- i.e. 4/5th of the fund. If you leave the five mill-owners standing at one end and also the 20-25 small donors who were either members of the Corporation or middle-class humanitarians, the whole phalanx of about 100 donors was composed of the big speculators on the Stock Exchange, through which they were directly affected by the strike. Thus the Mayor Fund was a combined effort of the big textile masters and stock exchange speculators.

Why had this exploiting gentry suddenly thought of the starving children of the strikers? Because they wanted to capture the strikers' goodwill through their children and thus break their determined hatred of Capitalism. It was a game of humanitarian Mondism operating through the workers' children. But the Bombay bourgeoisie, just as it lacks the highly advanced technique of the British bourgeoisie, which produces Mondism, also lacks its subtle propaganda and corruption methods. The more or less realist industrialist manufacturers among the donors of the fund were overcome by the spirit of the nervous bania stock exchange speculator who reconciles his gambling and his ~~God~~ by humanitarian charity. So when it came to the question as to who should be benefited by the relief, the industrialist donors did not object to the relief being limited to the strikers' children only. In fact they had paid with that idea. But the speculators objected. They said it would be a direct help to the strikers. Both the

sections wanted some gain. The one wanted to prepare a ground for class collaboration. The other wanted a reputation for charity, and all wanted the big middle-class petty-bourgeois strata to think that after all the bourgeoisie was not so bad, not so cruel as to cut the wages of the workers. Otherwise why should it feel for the children of the strikers and pay Rs. 50,000/- for them? Ultimately, the fund had to be named the Mayor Relief Fund "for children" and not "for strikers' children".

The game of the bourgeoisie was seen through at once and I wrote an article in this strain in the *Kranti* of the 15th July 1928 (Ex. P. 1744) headed "The deceptive Vampire of the bourgeoisie". It said "the owners cut down Rs. 50,00,000 from our wages and when the workers go on strike they pay out of this sum Rs. 20,000/- for the children's relief. One belly of the Vampire eats us workers and after having eaten us up, offers consolation to our children that they may not cry. Its one mouth orders wage-cuts in order to crush us and another mouth tries to cheat us with sweet talk through our children. One hand of the bourgeoisie throws us out from the houses on the street with our children because of the arrears of rent and another hand pretends to feed our children. All these are the deceptions of the cruel blood-sucking Vampire. If the deceptive temptor gives you good food, eat it, if it gives a palace, take it; but afterwards when it tells you to resume work on its conditions and be a slave, kick it out and go on with your strike".

The distribution of relief started on 23rd July at seven centres. Here again the bourgeoisie behaved insolently towards the workers. They would not give milk or food intended for the children to their mothers. The reason they gave was that the parents might eat the ration and starve the children. Could any one but a corrupt and callous bourgeois think of such a thing? It is the bourgeoisie and the feudal princes, who have been known to sell, kidnap or murder their sons or daughters on the question of family partnership of the stolen millions. Naturally they cannot see better morality in others. Secondly, on the centres of distribution boards were hung saying "For the relief of children of the poor" (Reference Exts. of speeches.) That board had a sting of

humiliation since all children were to be treated as of beggars. Now though we recognise that beggars and thieves and such other sections are by-products of poverty and exploitation, yet the working-class resists and must resist being classed with these 'lumpen' sections. The working-class is poor no doubt, but its poverty has nothing in common with the poverty of the beggars or the thieves. Because it is a class that has the consciousness and self-respect of being the producers of social wealth. The workers resented the boards and we apprised the Committee of the Mayor Fund of this fact. They then struck out the words "of the poor" from the headline. The Kranti of the 15th made suggestions to the Mayor about the management of relief but they were not heeded by his Committee. The third form of insolence was the selection of places wherefrom relief was distributed. The centre at Chinchpokli was the plague inoculation centre of the Municipality and the one at Parel was the centre for small-pox vaccination. It was due either to grim and insulting satire or a sheer lack of imagination. The mention of these centres in the announcement was sufficient to scare away any intending receiver of relief from going to those places to receive it. We had to tell the workers, in order to persuade them to send their children to receive relief, that they would be quite immune from the plague of the bourgeoisie, if they went with a strong injection of proletarian class consciousness.

D/- 14.12.31

The effect of all this was that very few families took advantage of the fund, though it is some pleasure to us that the orphans of the street, at least, had some food for a few days.

The fund was closed on the calling off the strike. Not a few contractors made money out of it. The Municipal Commissioner had taken charge of the arrangements with his big staff that managed the city of a million souls. Naturally the bureaucratic management cost more than what it costs to the Strike Committee to give relief to 30,000 strikers, with the aid of a few workers who were not "experts in administration". In the whole disposal of the fund the actual relief given was 72 per cent of the collections

excluding the balance, or 79 per cent if we include the balance (7 per cent) of the account. This omits the consideration as to what was the quantity of food for equal amounts paid by the Mayor Fund and the Strike Committee. This was an important factor as the arrangements of food of the Mayor Fund were done by contractors while ours were made by direct purchases from the grain market on a large scale and by distribution without the profits of intermediaries. The actual relief delivered to the strikers from our fund constituted 88 per cent of total collections while it was 72 per cent from the Mayor Fund. 21 per cent in the case of the Mayor Fund were administrative expenses of relief alone while in our case the balance of 12 per cent represented all the activities of the Strike Committee. Actual relief administration cost us not more than 3 per cent of our total collections. If we allow ten per cent margin to the contractors, the value of the Mayor's actual relief comes to 65 per cent, with 28 per cent for intermediaries and the administrative bureaucracy. The workers' management thus cost three per cent while the bourgeois management cost 28 per cent of the collections.

**121. The Mayor's efforts at negotiations—M. Shaukat Ali comes out to break the strike—alternative proposals—our standard scheme**

It was with such traditions that the Mayor called a conference for settlement of the strike. The conference took up the question of negotiations at the stage where it had been left off at the Hidayatullah Conference of 16th August, i.e. the question on what terms the strike should be called off, if an Enquiry Committee is to function. Some three or four alternative schemes were proposed by us. The Mayor and his supporters accepted some of them. He also brought some alternative schemes (which we were willing to accept), "but none of which were accepted by the Mill-owners' Association," observes the Fawcett Committee on page 8 of its report. So this attempt to end the strike also failed because the mill-owners refused all schemes of settlement. This shows who prolonged the strike and how the mill-owners were trying to smash it by prolongation.

During the negotiations through the President of the Corporation, another party had come on the scene to take active interest in the breaking up of the strike. This was the notorious Maulana Shaukat Ali. I have already referred to the attempt of the Khilafat Committee and the Maulana to bring communalism into the strike by proposing to give money to the Strike Committee, ear-marked for Muslim workers only, and how that offer was rejected by the workers, both Hindu and Muslim. Since that time the Maulana was not heard of. Now suddenly he appeared at the Conference in the Corporation Hall and very soon around him was collected a group of Mohammadan businessmen, corporators and others. He was particularly pushed forward by Mr. Usman Subhani, the agent of the Prahlad Mills, and the brother of Mr. Usman Subhani, the famous millionaire of the early Congress and Khilafat days. It was soon evident that this group was being pushed forth at the instance of the Fazalbhoy group also. We smelt some sinister game in the appearance of the Maulana. He in fact understood nothing of the dispute or the industry. But like a goonda always on hire he had come and wanted to trade on his onetime patriotism and services to the country. He almost assumed the airs of a dictator and threatened that if the strike were not called off he would ask all the Mohammadan workers to break away and resume work. On the failure of the Conference he attempted to carry out this threat. He hired some ten or fifteen unemployed goondas and went to the locality of the Mohammadan workers. He harangued the workers, abused the Strike Committee and told them to go back to work. He also made his goondas preach the futility of strikes. But the trick was soon exposed when the workers began to ask these fellows about their wages, what mill they worked in and what they knew of textile work. The goondas were found to be merely dumies dressed as workers. The Maulana got enraged and had to beat a hasty retreat. The Maulana's defeat was due to the fact that the class solidarity of workers is superior to their communal prejudices. Here was a class war with the bourgeoisie. Amongst the workers on one side were Hindus, Mohammadans, Parsees, etc. Amongst the bourgeoisie, on the

other side, there were Hindus, Mohammadans, Parsees and Europeans. Both the sides were fighting each other bitterly, irrespective of their caste or religion. Muslim mill-owners and Hindu mill-owners were united in starving Muslim workers and Hindu workers without any reference to their respective gods or holy books except their holy books of bank accounts. The workers of Bombay had cultivated sufficient consciousness, through the several general strikes that they had fought, and were not going to be duped by an agent provocateur of British Imperialism. The whole episode was exposed in the *Kranti* in a workers' letter, Exh: P. 1744, dated 20th September 1928; the Maulana afterwards did not come in the workers' area, until his sinister presence was again requisitioned by his masters four months later, in the Communal Riots of February 1929.

During the negotiations at the Corporation, we found that the slogan of demanding wages and rates of 1925 or any other year had its own danger also. So far as fixed wages were concerned, there was not much trouble in finding out what they were, as there were no material changes in the fixed wages directly since 1925. The change in such cases was in the increased work for equivalent wages due to reduction of the numbers of men per thousand spindles. The difficulty lay in the piecework rates. There were hundreds of varieties of cloth and consequently hundreds of piece rates. The mill-owners resisted all attempts at inspection of their books to verify these rates. The rates were so many that the workers could not be expected to remember all of them correctly. Moreover, if a change of two or three counts were made in the same variety of cloth it was very difficult to detect the change at once, until it led to a fall in the total wages and had run for some time. Such were some of the difficulties of demanding restoration of conditions and rates, to those found in a particular year. But we had to do it and rely on the vast memory of the hundreds of intelligent workers as there was no other alternative. When the standard scheme was put forth, its one merit was that it left nothing to vagueness and if operated carefully would have given very little chance to the bureaucracy in the mills to cheat the



workers by variation of counts or false rates, provided there was a vigilant union to get the scheme correctly applied. But the scheme could not be applied in its present form since it contained many discrepancies; even the mill-owners did not know its implications, except the two or three framers of it. It contained a big wage-cut on an average and the cut mounted even to 30 per cent on previous rates in some cases. The workers could not be expected to have technicians to understand the scheme and therefore the easiest way found was to reject it altogether. But even, if it were rejected, we had to fall back upon the demand of wages for a particular year, which was definite regarding fixed wages but vague regarding piece rates, especially in the weaving department. We had already in our demands endorsed the principle of standardisation, and we could not reject it if it could be done without any harm to the workers. Once the workers were prejudiced against the very idea of standardisation it would be a difficult thing to standardise wages and conditions at anytime afterwards, which would not have been in their interest. Therefore we had to find an alternative. And that was to stand by the original demand of 1925 wages and rates or to ask for 30 per cent above the standard scheme (12 August 1928). The latter was adopted only to bring home to all parties the exact extent of the cut involved and it had the beneficial and tactical effect of forcing the mill-owners to acknowledge for the first-time that they had incorporated a cut of wages in the scheme. But this slogan of 30 per cent also was not very definite. Because on the ordinary lower count sorts the cut was not 30 per cent but less. The simple addition of 30 per cent to every rate in the scheme would not have solved the matters and this is what the mill-owners demonstrated at the Mayor's Conference. We were naturally asked how we would distribute this 30 per cent. Such a question was purely a tactic, because the mill-owners expected us to plead ignorance of the mechanism of the scheme. We had to take up the challenge and show how the 30 per cent could be distributed. We therefore decided (28th-August 1928) to frame a new standard scheme of

ours, incorporating in it the wages, conditions and rates that were demanded by the workers. We told the workers about this (see any speech in exhibit about this time) and asked them to come forth with their suggestions. A host of very intelligent workers from the rank and file came with information without which it would have been impossible to frame any scheme. (Some of the strike meetings, reports about which are put into exhibit, were held for this purpose.) With their assistance the task was carried out. The challenge of the mill-owners benefited us in more than one way. It called forth several intelligent workers and linked them up actively with the work of the strike. We discovered potential leaders and technicians. The principle of the standard scheme was studied and understood by us and the workers more thoroughly than before. We overcame the danger for the time being of permanently prejudicing the workers against standardisation *per se*, and most important of all, the wages and conditions demanded were formulated in most definite and unequivocal terms, leaving no room, if agreed upon by the owners, for mischief according to the whims of individual mills and bureaucrats. Henceforth our demand thus was: "We too want a standard scheme. We have made one. Give us wages according to it, or alternatively restore the pre-cut wages and conditions."

It is not possible here nor is it necessary to explain the mill-owners' standard scheme which prolonged the strike and the amendments we proposed to it. But I will give a few examples of the rates proposed for weaving varieties by mill-owners and those proposed by us. I will also show the changes proposed in spinning wages. From that, it can be seen that we did not make such demands on the mill-owners as could be called exorbitant or could not be met by them. It will also show that, as in the General Strike of 1924, the impartial Inquiry Committee, this time the Fawcett Committee, in its report wholly agreed with the mill-owners' proposals. It will also show how our demand of increase in the weavers' rates had to be distributed in a complicated manner in the whole scheme.

### SPINNING SECTION

Department	Wages as proposed by the mill-owners' scheme in July 1928			Wages as proposed in the workers' scheme in September			Wages as proposed by the mill-owners in their amended scheme in October	Wages as approved by the Fawcett Committee
1	2			3			4	5
<b>BLOW ROOM</b>	Rs. As Ps.			Rs. As. Ps.			Rs. As Ps.	Rs. As Ps.
Nowganes ..	30	9	7	34	0	0	Same as in column 2	Same as in column 4
Lattice Freeders ..	23	12	9	26	6	0	Do	Do
Pickers and Sweepers ..	17	0	0	20	7	0	17 8 9	Do
Oilers ..	30	9	7	34	0	0	Same as in column 2	Do
Exhaust and Breaker Scutcher, Inter-Finisher	27	3	3	28	8	0	Do	Do
<b>CARD ROOM</b>								
Grinders and Strippers	27	3	3	28	1	0	28 0 9	Do
Fly gatherers ..	25	8	0	25	8	0	Same as in column 2	Do
Lap carriers ..	25	8	0	25	8	0	Do	Do
Can boys ..	22	1	7	25	8	0	22 15 2	Do
Flat Grinders ..	27	3	3	30	10	0	Same as in column 2	Do
Oilers ..	30	9	7	34	0	0	Do	Do
<b>INTER AND ROVING FRAMES</b>								
Drawing T. ater ..	33	4	0	35	0	0	Do	Do
Slubbers ..	38	0	0	38	0	0	Do	Do
Inter-Tenter ..	35	0	0	36	0	0	Do	Do
Rovers ..	32	0	0	38	0	0	Do	33 0 0
Doffer boys ..	20	6	6	23	0	0	Do	Same as in column 4
Bigaries ..	23	12	10	27	4	0	Do	Do
<b>RING SPINNING</b>								
Siders—Singleside up to 300 spindles	26	5	9	27	4	0	Do	Do
Singleside up to 309/360	27	3	3	28	8	0	Do	Do
Singleside up to 361/420	28	0	9	29	12	0	Do	Do
Doffer boys ..	20	6	6	23	0	0	Do	Do
Tarwalla ..	25	8	0	28	1	0	26 5 9	Do
Oilers and Banders ..	34	0	0	37	7	0	Same as in column 2	Do
Doff carriers ..	23	12	0	30	10	0	Do	Do
Fitters ..	85	0	0	102	0	0	Do	Do
<b>WINDING</b>								
Grey winders ..				24	0	0	19 8 0	Do
Colour winders ..				30	0	0	22 0 0	Do
Warpers ..	52	0	0	60	0	0	52 0 0	52 0 0
Creel boys ..	20	6	6	24	0	0	21 4 0	Same as in column 4

## TWO EXAMPLES IN WEAVING

Sort Plain Khadi width 24 inches	Allowance as per mill-owner's list	According to workers' scheme	As amended by mill owners during negotiations
1	2	3	4
Length 24 yards Weight 6¾ Lbs Reed 40 Pick 40  Warp 14 Weft 9  SORT—PATTI PACHA DOBBY DHOTIE Width 30 inches  Length 7 yards Weight 1½ Lbs Shafts 8 Border 1¼" One runner 1¼" Reed 40 Pick 34 Warp 24 Weft 32	Width 20 per cent Weft 7 per cent Pick Rate 1 33 pies per sq yard Result —16 sq yards at 1 33 pies per sq yard plus 27 per cent Whole piece paid at 27 pies      Width 6 per cent Dhotie 17 per cent Dobby 6 per cent Pick Rate 1 13 Result —5 83 sq yards at 1 13 pies per sq yard Whole piece paid at 8 5 pies  Increase of column 3 over 4 =	20 per cent 12 per cent 1 53 Result —  32 31 pies Increase of column 3 over 4   6 per cent 27 per cent 12 per cent 1 30  11 pies  20 per cent	20 per cent 9 per cent 1 36 Result —  28 pies = 15 4 per cent   6 per cent 17 per cent 12 per cent 1 16  9 12

However, the specific mention about 1925 wages and rates had to be dropped altogether at a later stage. The demand of 1925 wages was formulated when we were not thoroughly aware of the slow change that had come into the character of production in the Bombay Textiles. We became aware of the details of this only after the General Strike was on. When we began to deal with the details of standardisation we found that there were hundreds of varieties that were not being produced in 1925. So the demand of restoring rates of that year did not cover all grounds. We also found that March 1927 was a period which satisfied our demand. So we adopted that as an alternative to 1925. This period also had one other advantage. The minor objections of the mill-owners, dictated by their pride about granting our demands exactly in the same terms we wanted, were also satisfied by the change we made. Thus our main demand embracing the majority of workers contained three alternatives for compromise: (1) workers' standard scheme of wages, or (2) 30 per cent above mill-owners' standard scheme

or, (3) the wages and conditions of 1927 March. The second most important demand was the discontinuance of the rational scheme introduced in some of the mills and of retrenchment. This was the only outcome of the Mayor's Conference.

**122. More proposals for compromise—discussions with mill-owners broke down again in September 1928—settlement of October 1928 and the end of the General Strike**

When the Conference failed many individual merchants, mill-owners and intermediaries began their own efforts to settle the strike. One such effort was done by Seth Mangaldas, the co-arbitrator of Mahatma Gandhi in Ahmedabad mill disputes. This gentleman called me to his house to have a talk about the strike. Seth Mangaldas expressed great sympathy for the starving workers and with that prelude asked me on what conditions we were prepared to call off the strike. I told him the conditions stated above. To my surprise, Seth Mangaldas expressed himself strongly against the mill-owners' standard scheme and offered me the tempting proposal of making common cause with us to get the scheme scrapped. I asked him how many mills would join hands with him in that proposal. Without promising anything I asked him to ascertain that. He sent for me the next day, and told me that about 20 mills would be willing. In the meantime I had not been idle. I had a suspicion that those who would accept Seth Mangaldas's proposal must be such mills as would be required to pay somewhat higher rates if the standard scheme were applied to them, than they were doing at the time and that some of these mills must be of the worst lot and not belonging to the big syndicate. I had an idea which mills were of this type. So next day, when Seth Mangaldas told me of the 20 mills my suspicions were confirmed, though he refused to give directly their names. Then without much beating about the bush I asked him what his next proposal was if the standard scheme was scrapped. Then the gentleman with a smile wailed over the plight of the industry and ultimately said that we should *negotiate a direct cut on the existing rates*. On this I gave him a direct reply then and there. I told him that his group wanted to make common cause with us against the standard scheme

because under that scheme they would have to pay higher rates in some departments. That is, their present wages were lower than those obtaining in the bigger syndicates and even lower than what those syndicates wanted to pay after the cut as presented in the scheme. So it was sheer nonsense to ask us to negotiate a wage-cut even on those lower rates, and there the talks ended.

Another proposal came through the Madhavji Dharamsi Mill that a certain group of mills were ready to accept the demands of 1925 wages, if the Joint Strike Committee would agree to call off the strike for their mills and if it wanted, continue it for other mills. We could not consider such an absurd proposal; because it meant a break up of the solid front and a reversion to the conditions of 16th April, after five months of suffering. However, we did not refuse the proposal at once. We told the intermediary that we could not consider such a proposal from a group of mills separately. It should come through the Mill-owners' Association or the group concerned should leave the Mill-owners' Association first. Then we would consider it. The group would not dare to leave the Association as the banking interests, guided by the bigger syndicates, would have at once descended on them and ruined them by a credit boycott, foreclosures and such other methods. The intermediary confessed this as much to us. But since this time, dissensions amongst the mill-owners grew and gradually, except the Sassoons, they were ready to restore the conditions of March 1927. The Sassoons would not agree to give up their rational system. Still they changed on one point. Formerly they would not allow the Association to negotiate except on the standard scheme and their rational system. Now they were prepared to let the standard scheme go and also the cut if the others desired but themselves would not give up their system.

When the mill-owners were threatened with disruption the negotiations were resumed and several sittings between them and the Strike Committee were held. We went through the whole scheme item by item. We got important changes effected in the spinning section in the matter of rates and number of men. But when we came to the weaving section we again struck against rocks. Apart from other sections, the mill-owners insisted on a cut

of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent on weavers' wages, to which we could not agree. In order to draw out the real intentions of the mill-owners, in one of the sittings we said we would think of a cut of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The mill-owners interpreted this as the beginning of the end of our opposition and after a good deal of thinking they brought down their proposal to 5 per cent but they would not come lower in the hope that we had now begun to break up and would soon accept the whole cut as proposed by them. The next day they went to the press with the announcement that we had agreed to the principle of a wage-cut. We replied by repudiating the suggestion and saying that the offer did not stand any longer, and had been made only with a view to effecting an immediate compromise.

The month of September was the fifth month of the strike and in our negotiations we kept on saying that we could hold out another five months. Our relief operations were being replenished from time to time by the working-class of every country and every industry. But as I have already said the staying power of the strikers did not depend on the sum of money available for relief though it helped the poorest sections to a certain extent. To remain unemployed for a period of five months was not an ordinary test for the fighting workers whose average daily wage had not been more than 20 annas. It was still more trying for the workers of the Sassoon and other mills, who had already suffered for more than two months prior to the General Strike. Naturally here and there, small groups of people did become anxious for a settlement. The pressure of hunger began to be visible in the small success that a few mills had in recruiting a few hundred workers for cleaning, bundling and godown work. Though a few hundreds in a mass of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs, did not constitute any appreciable strength, yet it could be read as an indication of the general pressure that was slowly accumulating. Naturally the question arose if we should still stick to an uncompromising position and risk a break up and defeat. Such a question has no hard and fast answer. In certain situations a compromise becomes necessary while in others a defeat does more good than a compromise. If we were thinking of compromise we were doing it because at that time it was necessary to save the strike from defeat; a defeat at that stage would have meant the

wiping out of the new outlook from the Trade Union field before it had struck roots. It was the first strike that was being carried out consciously on the principle of class-struggle and under a revolutionary leadership. If we could secure the demands for the majority of workers but not all the demands of all the workers and if we could not hold out longer it was advantageous to try a compromise, to accept a little retreat in order to advance with double vigour.

The compromise suggested was that the rational system would not be extended to mills where it was not working prior to the General Strike. That the conditions of March 1927, that is wage-cuts and retrenchment would be restored. The compromise did not benefit the workers in the Sassoon group—the rational system was to remain there as it was, and this was what made the proposed agreement a compromise and not a complete victory. The whole agreement was to be in force till the Inquiry Committee, to be appointed, had reported on the subject-matter of the dispute. It was going to be, on the whole, a victory for us as it restored the wage-cuts and retrenchment. A general outline of the compromise was discussed and agreed upon.

On September 4th the Public Safety Bill was moved and it soon became clear that in spite of the Bolshevik bogey raised by Government, the Bill met opposition from sections of the nationalist bourgeoisie. This opposition was not due to any desire on the part of the nationalist bourgeoisie to shield the radical Trade Unionists and revolutionary working-class leaders against whom the measure was intended, but because the bourgeoisie was afraid that the same weapon might be used against its own institutions and movement also.

D/- 15-12-31

There was not one speaker who defended the right of free speech and association for the Communists. They all opposed because Government had not taken them, the Indian bourgeoisie, into confidence. Take us into confidence and then we shall support Imperialism to go at the Communists and help the Government to cut off the support of the international proletariat



to the working-class of India as they want to do through the Bill. Such was the essence of the whole opposition. The Government would not compromise and the Bill was defeated. While the Bill was being discussed several members in the Assembly pointed to the Bombay Textile strike as the proof of Communist wickedness and the necessity for the Bill. In Bombay the mill-owners' spokesmen demanded the arrest of the Communist leaders of the strike (vide Exh: The Kranti). But none of these things helped them. The winter trade beginning with Diwali was also being lost and some of the weaker mills were going down completely. (Exhibit: The Kranti). So amongst the mill-owners also the desire for a compromise grew stronger at the end of September though the big syndicates were unmoved.

Some of the mill-owners gave a hint to the General Member of the Government of Bombay, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, to call another conference for the settlement of the strike. With the agreement of both the parties, on October 4th, a conference was held, where an agreement was arrived at and the strike was called off from 6th October, 1928. The struggle had lasted for 22 $\frac{1}{3}$ rd million working-days, three times longer than that of 1924 and twice than that of 1925.

What had we gained on 4th October, which was not being yielded by the mill-owners before, that we consented to call off the strike? Had we suddenly, as is alleged, given up our wickedness and wanton desire to prolong the strike, which was inflicting losses on the capitalists and hardships on the workers or had we compromised somehow or other to save our faces and get out of a difficult position as the late Mr. James wanted to put it?

I have already shown that till the August Conference the mill-owners wanted a complete surrender. So there was no question of settlement and compromise. It was a fight to a finish as it looked then. At the August Conference they insisted on resumption of work, before an Inquiry Committee was appointed and without any settlement as to the conditions of work and wages during the period of inquiry. The mill-owners in fact wanted the workers to resume work on their own standard

scheme. At the October Conference the dispute was not finally settled. An Inquiry Committee as proposed in the August Conference was proposed again and agreed upon. But the most important point was the conditions of wages and work during the inquiry period. When the terms on this point were being agreed upon everyone had the conviction that whatever the Inquiry Committee may say, these terms would have to continue for a long time to come. Had it not been so, there would not have been that intense opposition from the mill-owners and insistence from our side prior to and at the October Conference on this part of the agreement. In this part lay the essence of the agreement. The mill-owners agreed to restore the wage-cuts and retrenchment, i.e. to give the wages, rates and conditions of work of March 1927 and agreed not to extend their rational system. We, however, did not succeed in overthrowing the rational system from the Sassoon, Finlay and Koh-i-Noor Mills but we succeeded in stopping its extension. This was not being agreed to by the mill-owners at the August Conference. But they had to do it in October. So the strike had to go on till October. Every break up of negotiations on our part was due to the determination of the bourgeoisie to smash the strike completely. Every day added to the prolongation of the strike was due to the mill-owners not agreeing to the above terms before October and the workers' determination not to work on reduced wages and worsened conditions. If the strike was unusually prolonged it was due to the determination of the mill-owners to enforce what they called discipline and standardisation, wage-cuts and retrenchment. It was due to the fact that the mill-owners learnt very late that these things could not be enforced on fighting class-conscious workers led by a militant leadership working for the interest of the workers only and not corrupted by class-collaborationist dope, as is found in Ahmedabad. If the strike was prolonged, it was not that prolongation of strikes is a principle with us, but because it was necessary to win the demands. The struggle at that time was a defensive struggle. The mill-owners had attacked us and were determined to hold on till the workers surrendered. We could certainly not be expected to tell the workers not to hold on.

In answer to the attack, it was our duty to tell the workers to defend themselves till the attack was withdrawn; and not only to tell them but also to take steps to make it possible for them to defend. It has been suggested that we told the workers that if they prolonged the strike Capitalism would collapse. To expect Communists to make such a statement in its literal sense is absurd. No Communist believes that a simple stoppage of work and prolongation of strike, even on a national scale, can starve out and kill Capitalism. Capitalism is based on the violent exploitation of the workers and forcible seizure of the produce of labour power, sanctified in the capitalist system by the so-called laws of free contract and bourgeois property. A system based on force and compulsion refuses to die of anaemia. Strikes, Satyagraha etc. however prolonged, if not followed by a positive form of mass action for the seizure of power, only result in a temporary anaemia of the system. When Capitalism sees signs of it, it forcibly drinks the blood of the working-class. Knowing this we cannot be expected to say that if strikers only hold on for months and years Capitalism will collapse. Capitalism does not die. It is beheaded. So says History.

**123. Did we "use" the strike meetings and speeches during the strike?—their relation to strike matters and their educative function**

It has been shown so far how the General Strike of 1928 in the Bombay textile industry arose out of long-standing grievances and new attacks of the mill-owners on the workers' wages and conditions. It has also been shown how the mill-owners refused to negotiate till they were forced by the resistance of the workers. The strike was what the bourgeoisie calls a genuine trade dispute. Its origin or its duration was not a part of any conspiracy of Communists to bring ruin to the industry or to overthrow the Government. There was no political demand as such in the 17 demands which were the subject-matter of the strike. There was no demonstration, no resolution in any of the strike meetings as such even of a seditious character, let alone an incitement to insurrection against the State. It was not a strike preparatory to an insurrection, a general rising against the State or intended to develop into a general political strike to

overthrow or bring pressure by violence or threat of violence against the State. The draft of the 17 demands, the various stages of negotiations and the final agreement show this quite clearly.

Not being able to prove that this strike was a part of a conspiracy to overthrow the Government the Prosecution bring forward the speeches delivered during the strike and say that the Communists in the Strike Committee and the Girni Kamgar Union were "using the strike to further the aims of the conspiracy" or in the words of a press note of the Government of Bombay, "endeavouring to use the cloak of Trade Unionism as a mask for revolution." The late Mr. James, while speaking about our strike activities said that "the main objective" of the Communists in a strike is the education of the workers in mass action and "to provide so to speak a rehearsal for the general strike in the mass revolution." (Pages 94-95 of his Opening Address—foolscap edition). The other objective is to glorify the Communists, before the workers as their real leaders. I fail to see how if the Communists convince the workers that the Communist Party alone works in their interest, it becomes automatically a step in the conspiracy alleged in this case. Every party, including that of the bourgeoisie, is trying to convince the workers that it alone works for their good. If the other parties fail it is not our fault. The other parties fail because they fail the working-class in its hour of need. If the parties of the bourgeoisie have freedom to secure the leadership of the working-class, why not we, when you talk of equal rights and opportunities? To seek the reasons for a General Strike in the desire of the Communists to have a "rehearsal" is a philistine notion born from a stage manager's conception of the working-class? It conceives of the working-class as consisting of puppets ordered about as the Communists who are not supposed to belong to the workers may wish "to further their own masked interest". Such a conception is anything but Communist. The General Strike is not brought about for the sake of a rehearsal of mass action though its effect may act like a rehearsal. The working-class is not an idle army of mercenaries doing mock battles and rehearsals at command. Strikes and General Strikes are brought about, either at the call of an

organisation or without it, when the class position of the workers becomes worse and worse, grievances accumulate and the class-struggle in an acute form becomes necessary. The resulting discipline, mass formation, etc. follow from the needs of the struggle. They arise as bye-products but the strikes are not called specifically for them. Strikes are called or happen for a definite grievance of the whole class or a section of it.

If only a rehearsal were the reason of the 1928 strike, it was unnecessary. Because the textile workers in Bombay had seven such rehearsals previously. And each of them was getting more and more acute and prolonged, as has already been shown. Except one, (of 1924), all of them were successful completely and yet Bombay was far from a mass revolution. The way in which the Prosecution speak of the 1928 strike would lead one to suppose that Bombay should have had at least 9 mass revolutions by this time. Yet we have not seen even the top-mast of the approach of one. The fact is that general strikes alone, even on a national scale, cannot lead to mass revolutions. The mass revolution to start requires an all national crisis affecting both the exploiters and the exploited, a strong Communist Party with its roots not only in the workers but in the Army and Navy also. (See the Thesis of the Second Congress or any relevant article of Lenin). With such authoritative expositions it is absurd to charge the Communist who owe allegiance to Leninism of contemplating, in 1928 conditions, the overthrow of Government, by simply setting up or capturing Trade Unions and leading strikes in textiles or railways or other industries.

It is a fact that we seized the leadership of the Bombay textile workers through the General Strike. But it is not a fact that the strike was brought about in order to create an opportunity to seize the leadership. It has been shown how the strike arose out of the attack of the mill-owners and took place only when conditions became ripe for it, though appeals for it may have been issued months in advance. It was not brought about "according to a definite plan" as the Prosecution allege, by any of the accused.

When it cannot be proved that the Communists wanted to make the strike the beginning for a revolutionary uprising, when

it cannot be proved that the strike was brought about to ferment the atmosphere and begin a seizure of factories or begin the overthrow of Capitalism, when it cannot be proved that there was a general conspiracy, "a definite plan", to bring about a General Strike either in 1928 or in 1929, the Prosecution's last thread, by which they hang their case, is that we used the strikers' meetings to preach the principles of Communism, of Proletarian Revolution, the success of Soviet Russia and the necessity to have a like revolution in India also. During the strike, 170 meetings were held according to the Prosecution. Now this number is arrived at by purely guess work or by taking it for granted that meetings were held only when Police reporters reported that they were held. Some of the Police reporters have deposed that meetings were held almost every day and many a time two or three meetings were held on one day (P.W. 276) From April 16th to October 4th it is 172 days, which indicates how the Prosecution have arrived at the figure of 170 meetings. This leaves no room for more than one meeting on any of the days. According to me at least 250 meetings were held in this period and at least 700 speeches delivered. The records here contain only 55 speeches by shorthand reporters (P. W. 276 and 278) knowing Marathi, the language in which the speeches were delivered, and 14 reports are by a man who knew nothing of Marathi and therefore was not in a position to understand what was spoken. He has simply imagined the speeches, which is not a rare thing in journalistic history. (It is P. W. 273—Macwan). One P. W. No. 245 has filed an attendance role of his duties rather than a record of our activities. He has made a table showing the dates, when meetings of strikers were held, the accused who were present and spoke and whether he himself was present at that meeting or not. When he was not present he has filled in the dates and places according to what he was told by his informers. On such material this witness has reported a substance of speeches at two meetings only. He does not file any reports as such of speeches taken on the spot. Thus out of a total of 700 speeches only 71 i.e. 1/10th are brought here in any form. According to one witness, P. W. 278, he reported 88 meetings consisting of

more than one speech; from him 35 speeches are on record. So out of 700 speeches one need pay some attention only to 55—those reported by shorthand reporters who knew Marathi. Thus the Court is asked to form an opinion as to the kind of education we were giving to the workers through the meetings from a record of our "educational" activity, of which 92 per cent record is not available or not kept before the Court and only 8 per cent can be given some consideration. Even these 8 per cent of the speeches do not fairly represent the speech-activity in the strike of all those who participated. 23 out of these 55 speeches are put on the name of one person only and thus the largest part of the red pencil of the Prosecution has been spent on 3 per cent of speech-activity during the longest strike in textile history and with the help of this profuse use of the red pencil, a minute part is so magnified as to over-shadow the remaining 97 per cent of which nothing is kept before the Court in any form deserving consideration. From such a performance a generalisation is made that the strike meetings were used as a cloak to foment violent revolutionary activity. My reply to such an unwarranted formulation on insufficient and distorted data, is that there is no doubt that we held meetings during this strike on such a large scale as had not been done by any one in the previous strikes in Bombay. But to draw the inference about the subject matter of all or most of these meetings, from the large number of speeches of one or two persons only, which, however, in the total number of speeches form a very small fraction, is a faulty and unreliable method. For example if from the lectures delivered by a college staff of professors, only those of the professors of history and politics and especially only those of his relating to the period of violent revolutions in British history were reported and all the other lectures were suppressed, would it be an accurate inference, to say that the particular college and its staff always lectured on nothing but politics and violent revolutions? But that is exactly what is being done here.

The strike period is the only period when the cultural level of the workers can be raised on a mass scale. The very low wages and high hours of work leave no margin of leisure to the workers

to pay attention to their cultural equipment. Neither does the State give any educational facilities and even if it does on a small scale, they are useless unless the wages are raised and hours of work lowered, so that there is less exhaustion and deterioration of the intellectual system of the workers and less incentive to withhold the children from schools and put them on earning some pittance to support themselves and the family. During the strike period a will to acquire some power, to win the strike, agitate and awaken mental powers and ample leisure are elements that urge the workers to acquire knowledge and rise superior to their conditions; though the increased pressure of starvation cripples much of this awakened activity. Therefore it is during the strike period that mass education can be carried on effectively and on a large scale. The mass scale can operate only through meetings and lectures. One lecture on any subject in a strike is more valuable than one month in a night school. So one of our reasons in holding such large number of meetings was to carry on education on a mass scale. Lectures were delivered on the economic construction of present day society, on the history of India and other countries, on class war, dictatorship, the stock exchange, industrial development, agriculture and several other subjects. There is no denying the fact that when Communists spoke on these subjects they did it from the Marxist point of view. Certainly they could not be expected to do it according to the bourgeois text books. The bourgeoisie with its monopoly of education and political power preaches its own class point of view on these subjects, in order that its own class rule should be accepted as the best and eternal; thus culturally and mentally incapacitating the revolutionary class from thinking or working for any better system. The Communists, who have a better social order to introduce, can bring their point of view forward only through meetings, books, and papers and they claim the right to do so. Just as the modern bourgeoisie has the right to explain history as the eternal movement of men to acquire private property and the good deeds of the propertied men and their



agent-heroes, just as the innumerable religious sects have the right to explain it as the eternal oscillation of the head or the tail of their respective favourite gods and devils so we claim the right to explain it by the materialist method of Marxism as an unceasing class war to be terminated only when the Communist society is established.

It would be, however, a one-sided statement that the lectures were only for this purpose. Meetings were held to make announcements about relief distribution, about the various negotiations for settling the strike, about picketing, about attempts to break the strike, about the standard scheme and so on. The Strike Committee could not spend money on handbills on a large scale and the illiteracy and poverty of the workers prevented the medium of newspapers being utilised to its full effect. That is why we considered meetings most essential for the conduct of the strike. Knowing this full well Imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie now adopt a course of stopping all meetings of workers, as soon as there is a strike, under S. 144 on the pretext that it will cause breach of public peace. The workers are forced to wage a struggle for the right of meetings, which is being denied to them. When we denounce the imperialist and the Indian bourgeoisie for prohibiting meetings, they say, we use inciting language in our meetings, we go beyond "our limits", therefore Government is forced to prohibit meetings and the Indian bourgeoisie supports them in this. If that is so why do you gag under S. 144 even the pro-Government yellow internationalists, the most respectable moderates, like Messrs. Joshi and Giri? Mr. N. M. Joshi was forbidden to enter the S.I. Railway strike area in 1928 and Mr. Giri was debarred from going to Hyderabad and Mysore in 1928 and 1931. None can accuse these gentlemen, who speak "within limits" and believe more in the efficacy of Sir George Rainy's smiles and the Railway Board than in the proletariat, of ever attempting to break the peace. Yet they are also gaged, why? Because Imperialism does not want to tolerate even the least Trade Union activity and is out to smash all the elementary rights of the workers.

**124. Our meetings did not incite violence—fall in the cases of damage to property and crime in the mill area during the strike period—the evidence of speeches and the Riots Inquiry Committee**

Our meetings had the effect of preventing any possible breach of peace rather than causing it. The assembling of thousands of workers in one place morning and evening gave them consciousness of a solid class strength, reduced the irritation and provocation that arises from the feeling of personal individual weakness and suffering, gave them additional courage and patience and prevented isolated clashes as far as possible. Of course a strike without clashes is impossible. The insolence of the police force, the blacklegs etc. necessarily results in clashes which are inevitable. But on the whole our strike was free from these. This has been recognised even by the officers of Imperialism, and some of them have been puzzled by it. Having been all along fed on the fables created by the imperialist lie factories, about the atrocities, arson and murder and all sorts of conceivable or inconceivable cruelties which the bourgeoisie could invent and attribute to the workers, these imperialists expected a riot every day, and a murder every hour during the strike, because they were told that the Communist leaders as such were telling the people to revolt rebel, destroy and burn. But nothing of the kind happened during or after the strike. For certain reasons you find imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie disagreeing for once about the Communists and the stories about violence advised or committed by them. You find the Indian bourgeoisie more reactionary and lying than the imperialists. During the strike and after, the Indian capitalists thundered for our blood. But the imperialists refused at that time. The reason for refusal is not that Imperialism had grown democratic, honest or truthful. The reason was that all the sections of the Indian bourgeoisie, including the extremists had not yet consented to our beheading as they did later on. However, that apart. Whatever the reasons, when a deputation of the European and Indian Merchants' Chambers waited on the

Governor of Bombay and in consistency with their counter-revolutionary and pro-imperialist role asked that we should be arrested and put in prison or dealt with otherwise for the sake of their profits, because we had created "a state of terror and violence in the mill area," the Governor in reply, agreed to their demand but said: "What has struck me most, so far as I have been able to study the history of the last nine months as a whole is that during that time in spite of the large number of hands involved in the stoppage of work, there has been on the whole so little damage done to person or property." The Governor claimed the credit of this for his police force, which, by the way; had done everything possible to provoke the men. But even then he had to add, "credit is also due to those of their leaders who had advised them in their own interest to refrain from creating disturbances and so losing the sympathy of the public." (Ex. D. 526, Communique dated 21.12.28 by the Director of Information, Bombay). The mill-owners' deputation said that law and order of the British Government had ceased to exist in the mill area of the city and a state of violence and terror under the guidance of the Communist leaders, prevailed in a part of the city where lived 5/6th of the whole population. Now it would be a very flattering and pleasing state of things, if the British law and order had really ceased to function. But however pleasing it might be, it was not a fact. Though we had the greatest influence over the workers, yet that part of Bombay had not turned into a Soviet and it is a lie to say that our influence meant violence, terror and crime. If it were as this gang of merchants said then how do you find the Police Report for the year 1928 saying "there has been a reduction of 30 per cent in crimes compared with the crimes of six years ago . . . the Delisle Road Police Station, which is in the centre of mill district had a reduction from 514 cases in 1927 to 346 in 1928. This is remarkable in view of the fact that all the mills were on strike for six months in the year" (page 4). It would mean that the greatest influence of Communists in the city leads to reduction in crime and not to its increase, even if crimes were to be interpreted according to the Imperialist Code. In the very heart of the area, where we were said to have almost established our

raj, the reduction of crimes was 67.3 per cent on the previous year, in which there was no Communist influence. This in fact makes out a case in favour of the workers' law and order, for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, for the influence and activities of the Communists rather than against them. The same police report on another page while complaining about our preaching "incessantly against Imperialism and Capitalism" observes "though the strike lasted for such a long period, it was comparatively peaceful" (page 21).

D/ 16.12.31

There is another pronouncement from Government on these speeches. After the Hindu-Muslim Riots in Bombay in February 1929, the Legislative Council on 20th February asked for an Inquiry Committee, which the Government appointed on 22nd April 1929. The Committee actually assembled for taking evidence on 24th June 1929. It signed its report on 22nd August 1929. Evidence regarding our strike speeches commenced in the Lower Court with P.W. 245 (Lower Court No. 147) on 30th August 1929 and regarding those reported by P.W. 278 (L.C. No. 190) on 11th September, by P.W. 276 (L.C. No. 192) on 12th September and P.W. 273 (L.C. No. 269) on 4th October 1929. Thus before these speeches were brought here on record they were produced before the Inquiry Committee which has quoted extracts from them in its report in an appendix (See report pages 9 and 41). Thus while the Court here was "judicially" going to enquire into the case, another Government Committee had already considered a part of the evidence to be produced here and given its verdict. With the seal of approval of an Inquiry Committee, Government became confident and brought these speeches before this Court. A comparison between the extracts in that appendix and the evidence here given will show that the Committee has quoted in advance almost verbatim, in a report signed on 27th August, a part of the deposition regarding my speech, of P.W. Hassan Ali given in this Court on 2nd September. It also extracts from speeches which here are exhibits P. 1699, 1709, 1711, 1714, 1717, 1718, 1719, 1722, 1724, 1726, and 1731. With these exhibits before them the Committee considered the evidence of the Hon'ble Mr. J.E.B. Hotson, at that time

the Home Member of the Government of Bombay and later on the Acting Governor for some time. This is what he said on 16th July 1929 on the matter of these speeches which were put before him and many more: "The Chairman asked witness what he had to say with regard to the suggestion made by certain witnesses that earlier and stronger action should have been taken by the Government against the Labour agitators who had been making inflammatory speeches."

Mr. Hotson replied that underlying the suggestion was the assumption that there was a direct connection between the Labour disputes and the disturbances. The Government were not quite certain that such a connection could be established.

The Chairman pointed out that a representative of one of the oil companies giving evidence had stated that the Labour leadership preached class hatred which developed into a communal riot.

The Home Member replied that the Government was bound to observe the strictest neutrality between the employers and the workers. Even when violent speeches were made it was not always justifiable to rush into a Prosecution. At all events in times of excitement people did use words stronger than what they really meant. For many months at all events whatever inflammatory speeches might have been made they did not result in violence. For a long time during the progress of the strike the Government were justified in holding their hand.

Another thing was, the Home Member continued, that there were "stories" going about the city as to what these Labour leaders were saying at these meetings. The Government used to have reports of all the speeches made at such meetings, and they never came across any inflammatory passages which some witnesses had attributed to the Labour leaders and all the enquiries made by Government failed to get corroboration of such speeches. He thought therefore that there was a good deal of exaggeration in the statements made by witnesses regarding the inflammatory speeches. After all the Government had to produce evidence that would stand in a court of law." (Exh D 386, *The Times of India* dated 18-7-1929).

When the speeches were before the Government for a long time they thought themselves justified in holding their hand and

thought that they were not sufficient to stand in a court of law. The failure of the Public Safety Bill, the failure to smash the strike, the increasing strength of our Union, and the failure of machinations to involve the militant workers in a pogrom changed this opinion. The conscience of Imperialism is elastic enough for that: Perhaps the speeches too had to undergo an operation to suit the new opinion. Till July, till the evidence of the Home Member, everything perhaps was not quite all right with the speeches, "to stand in a court of law". But the verdict of the counter-revolutionaries on the Riot Committee and the illogical and cowardly insistence of the Committee to throw everything on the shoulders of the Communists and to characterise speeches as inflammatory and inciting every sort of crime emboldened and pleased Government, with the result that here we find them in their present form "fit to stand before a court of law".

From the foregoing I want to make two points: that during the strike and in the speeches there was no incitement to acts of violence, that there were no acts of violence due to our speeches or because of the strike as such. But at the same time I do not assert that we were observing the "principle of violence". We could not be guilty on the one hand of asking the much oppressed workers to surrender their heads to the lathi blows of imperialist violence and on the other of wailing at the feet of the armed Black and Tans: "Oh! the people are non-violent. Beat, if you must, but not unto death." We neither accepted non-violence as a principle, nor incited the people to acts of violence. Our attitude was to carry on the strike peacefully and if the Police and agents of the mill-owners tried to terrorise the workers into submission, to resist it with all the might that they could command. Toleration of lathi blows on the heads of women and children may excite romantic tears and admiration from reverent preachers, it may help to move the big pro-imperialist bourgeoisie to signing a hypocritical protest, as the Bombay bourgeoisie did, with the callous and cowardly slogan "Beat but not unto death". But, though as a result of such protests Imperialism may substitute canes covered, if you like with Khaddar yarn, in place of the long lathis (as the Commissioner of Police did in Bombay last year) it does not serve to overthrow the Terror, to win freedom.

There is no contradiction or opportunism when on the one hand we asked the strike to be conducted peacefully and on the other hand spoke out one of our principles that no class power is overthrow except by violent revolution. The former was the immediate necessity of the objective situation. The latter is a deduction from historical experience, showing the inevitable way taken by all social revolutions in the past and that will be taken by them in the future also. The advocacy of the Socialist principle that a Socialist society will expropriate the property of the bourgeoisie has nowhere as yet led even the ingenious bourgeois law to charge a Socialist with conspiracy to commit house trespass, robbery, etc. It would be equally absurd to charge a Communist with conspiracy to commit acts of violence or to incite acts of violence, because he believes that independence from Imperialism and overthrow of Capitalism do not come except through a violent revolution. In this connection it may also be pointed out the thesis adopted by the Communist International in the Third World Congress in the year 1921. The thesis had an eye especially on European conditions of that period when the proletariat there was making a straight bid for power and overthrowing the bourgeois States—Republics and monarchies as well—by an armed revolution. In some cases the workers after seizing power had magnanimously released the bourgeois counter-revolutionaries, who on obtaining freedom dynamited the revolution. In some cases the workers accepted anarchist and social revolutionary tendencies, while in the majority of cases wherever possible the bourgeoisie shot, hanged and tortured the workers. About such conditions the thesis says (Exh: P. 2369): "With regard to the acts of White Terror and the fury of bourgeois justice, the C.P. must warn the workers not to be deceived during a crisis by a hypocritical appeal to their leniency by the enemy, but to demonstrate proletarian morality by acts of proletarian justice, in settling with the oppressors of the workers, and in times when the workers are only preparing themselves, when they have to be mobilised by agitation, by political campaigns and strikes, armed force may be used solely to defend the masses from bourgeois outrage. Individual acts of terrorism may demonstrate the

revolutionary rancour of the masses, and however justified they may be as acts of retribution against the lynch law of the bourgeoisie and its social democratic flunkies, such deeds will not raise the workers to a high level of organisation or make them better prepared to face the struggle. Acts of sabotage are only justified when used for the purpose of hindering the despatch of enemy troops against the workers or for conquering important strategic points from the enemy in direct combat. Personal terrorist acts while they can easily be justified in view of the lynch law of the bourgeoisie, are by no means the correct method for increasing the proletarian organisation and militant preparedness, for they give rise to the illusion in the minds of the working-class that the heroic deeds of individuals can take the place of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat." Such was the attitude of the C.I. in the European conditions of 1921. Could it be expected of Communists in India, while conducting a purely economic strike and that too in the conditions of 1928, which were not advanced to even one hundredth of what they were in 1921 Europe, advocate a contrary policy to the above and think or conspire to commit acts of violence as is alleged?

**125. My three strike meeting speeches—Exhibits P. 1701 M3, P. 2242 and P. 2245**

Out of the total of 71 reports of strike speeches of which 55 are by two shorthand Marathi reporters, 14 are by a newspaper reporter employed by the C.I.D., and not knowing Marathi shorthand reporting, and 2 merely short notes by a Police-station Inspector (P.W. 245), 3 speeches are put in evidence against me individually. (1) P. 1701 M3 reported by P.W. 278, Deobhanker and delivered on 21st July 1928 in the Marwari Vidyalay Hall. (2) P. 2242 of 2nd June, and (3) P. 2245 of 7th June both reported by P.W. 273, Macwan, and delivered in Nagu Sayaji Wadi.

I have not kept any diary of the meetings I attended and the speeches delivered. Therefore I am not in a position to say if I attended and delivered speeches at those places and on those dates which have been deposed to by the witnesses, because there have been cases during the strike under reference where reporters



reported in the press that I was present and spoke, while in fact I was not present at all at the meetings. When a glaring instance of this type occurred, reporting an imaginary speech of mine on the Bardoli Satyagraha in a meeting which I had never attended and therefore I had never any occasion to deliver the speech, I sent a contradiction to the press which was published once. (If I am allowed the opportunity I can produce that contradiction as a defence exhibit.) But when I found that it was becoming a practice and was part of a game against us, I did not again bother myself with such corrections. Many a time it happened that no reporter attended a meeting, but saw some one of us at his room or office, inquired where and when the meeting had been held and who attended. He would then go, put a para or two in the mouth of one or two of us, make out several copies and pass it on to a group of reporters for several papers. Then a report would appear with some such introduction. "The Labour leaders, as usual, harangued the strikers today at...." (See a sample in D 548). Though the report was the same one circulated to all, some of the sentences used to get coloured in the editorial offices according to the politics of the paper concerned.

I wonder how with the depositions of the two witnesses concerned with the three speeches of mine, I can be expected to explain. I will take the case of P. 1701. According to the witness, P.W. 278, it was delivered in English, before an English knowing audience of intellectuals of the Deccani petty-bourgeois area of Bombay city, called the Girgaon area, where the Hall is situated. As such I should have been easily making a hundred words a minute. The witness who reported this speech is not an English reporter and he himself says that this was known to the Deputy Commissioner of Police who posted him on duty. He acknowledges that he cannot take verbatim reports in English longhand and he himself did not know English shorthand.

When I suggested to the Court about this witness that I would like to carry out a test of the reporter in English, I was told that the question did not arise, and the conclusion was obvious that the man could not report English speeches. The witness says: "I took only what I thought important in the speakers' speech as it is impossible to take verbatim in English longhand. My report is not

a full report". In the face of such facts it is needless to comment on the attempt of the Prosecution in re-examination to get the statement from the witness—"whatever I have put down was said, though it is true that I missed a good deal". The witness has missed such a "good deal" that the report looks like that of an incoherent sleepy talk rather than that of a lecture delivered before an intellectual audience. Moreover, the reporter's knowledge of English is so meagre that he is incapable of following any speech in English, even to the smallest extent let alone, the important parts. This can be seen from the corrections made by the Deputy Commissioner of Police in the gist reports submitted by the witness and also in the present exhibit. I disclaim any responsibility to explain a report which has "missed a good deal"

Then I come to the next two exhibits. With regard to this the process of reporting is exactly the reverse to that of the above. The witness here is a Christian by birth, (a point especially brought forth in re-examination by the Prosecution itself), has the Gujarati vernacular as his mother-tongue, is a newspaper reporter in English shorthand, while the reports in exhibit are of speeches delivered in Marathi. You can never get such a perfect piece of evidence! I do not mean to suggest that his Christianity would stand in the way of his reporting the speeches of an anti-religious Communist or that his mother-tongue Gujarati would resent the entrance of Marathi on such a tongue of his as could very generously accommodate an evidence of falsehood and contradictions. Neither do I suggest that English shorthand reporting incapacitated his fingers from reporting in Marathi longhand or shorthand. None of these by themselves are mutually exclusive factors. But then we find all of them in all their worst distortions, that can be found only in a reporter, acting as a C.I.D. Informer, as he himself says, while serving as a chief reporter on the most patriotic daily newspaper, the "Bombay Chronicle", whose "sheet-anchor", we are told, is non-violence, and whose chief reporter of the political weather around, helping to steer that sheet-anchor, is an imperialist police spy. No wonder the "Chronicle" never anchored at a single point of truth regarding the workers' movement in the Bombay island. "Asked whether,

whenever he had been employed by the police, it was in his professional capacity as a reporter, the witness said 'in the whole world the press and the police have to co-operate. and they give us news and we give them something in return' ". This "something" in the present instance is his fourteen reports put into exhibit in this case against us and out of these fourteen "somethings" I am asked to explain two. What else can I say than that these reports are merely "somethings in return" for the news and the 300-400 rupees that the police paid him and have no other value? The witness unconsciously and in indignation has spoken the truth. In the whole world the class press and class police of the bourgeoisie have to co-operate and produce "something in return" for each others services, in order that the class enemy of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, may be decimated on the strength of that "something" of a piece of evidence in the courts of that bourgeoisie.

Let us see what processes these two speeches have been subjected to by this reporter. These speeches, delivered in Marathi, he followed in English, mentally translated them on the spot as they were being delivered and took notes of his mental translation in English shorthand. The witness says he knows simple Marathi but is not a Marathi scholar. Being not given to sticking to one thing either in life or in evidence, he also followed a Marathi speech by mental translation in Gujrati longhand and mixed it with English shorthand. (P. 2237 of Nimbkar, vide his deposition). Thus this prodigy, who has been a journalist and English shorthand reporter for the last 22 years, heard our speeches in Marathi, mentally translated them either in Gujrati or English, took them down in a mixture of Gujrati longhand and English shorthand, and finally gave them a form of "something" which now stands here as Prosecution evidence of what we spoke to the workers. Had it been a case under S. 124 A for seditious speeches, Government would not have dared to bring these against me even before a packed jury, but in a charge of conspiracy not only "something" but anything can become evidence.

The Prosecution finding that the reliability of the witness were very rudely shattered, hit upon a very ingenious device of proving that he knew Marathi and consequently Marathi reporting also.

They got from him the following statement "our church services and prayers are conducted in Marathi". Thereby the Prosecution want to challenge the effect of our cross-examination showing that the witness knew nothing of Marathi or Marathi reporting. The logic of the Prosecution unfortunately is undermined by History. The church services and prayers of an Indian Christian may be carried on in Marathi. But the Prosecution failed to ask this most Christian reporter if he himself ever attended his church. I think the Prosecution thought the question superfluous. Because they knew that the necessity to attend his church prayers is very peremptory for a man like this reporter, who, while on leave with full pay from a patriotic daily, was doing the work for the C.I.D. Certainly the need to wash his sins must be very pressing and I am prepared to grant that he regularly attended his prayers. But then history shows that God has never ordained that his devotees must understand the language of the divine utterance. On the contrary, the practice has been that all the transactions between God and his devotees have been carried on in something like a code language. The Parsis do not understand the Pahlavi of their prayers, the majority of Mohammedans do not understand the Arabic of their Quaranic prayers, the Hindus have at least a hundred keys to decode the Vedas; and for the Christians, they have Latin for Roman Catholic services. Contrary to this most conservative march of history is there any reason why our most Christianly conservative reporter of 22 years experience in English reporting should and must understand the Marathi of his prayers? I again grant that this devout double dealer did understand the language of his church, which church also, I grant for a moment, was, *unlike its historical traditions, not practising double dealing between God and his devotees in this case.* Because otherwise if the church were affected by its devotees, then it might also begin mentally translating the original Latin prayers in Biblical English shorthand and deliver them in a mixture of Gujrati longhand with an accent or alphabet of Marathi, and especially for the benefit of so versatile a devotee as Mr. Macwan. But I grant that the excellent church did not do this and our Mr. reporter understood the church Marathi. But what understanding our Marathi, the Marathi of the Bolshevik

speakers and also of ordinary men? Unfortunately for the Prosecution their own expert Marathi witness, direct from the oriental Translators' Office of the Bombay Government Mr. Ezekiel, P.W. 275, says "the Marathi translation of the Bible, Old and New Testament is in what is popularly called missionary Marathi. Marathi used in churches is very different Marathi." Mr. Ezekiel has been put forward as a witness who has translated the Marathi documents and newspapers for the Prosecution and yet he has so carelessly undermined the foundations of the Marathi of a brother witness. Mr. Ezekiel is a Jew and the Prosecution are certainly entitled to argue that Mr. Ezekiel for a time forgot his role of a brother witness and as a Jew took his ancient revenge against the Christian Mr. Macwan. The fact is that both the witnesses are faithful to their sole master, but contradicted each other's interests and opinions simply because their master is a bundle of contradictions.

The Defence did not leave the matter at that. A number of Marathi sentences from the speeches on record were read out to the witness—Macwan. In one case of a simple sentence of six words, he said "I cannot follow the words spoken nor read the Marathi writing" (D 617). Many of the sentences dictated by one of the accused and taken down by this reporter were shown to the Marathi translator Mr. Ezekiel. In one case he said, "it is however not good Marathi. There are also many mistakes in spelling and grammar". Regarding another sentence taken down by him the translator says "similarly (the sentence) is grammatically wrong". "The sentence (follows) sounds to me as if the writer were a Gujrati".

The obvious conclusion is this. When the police found that the Times of India reporter Mr. Sirur who was formerly doing work for them got into trouble with the strikers for false reporting, they searched for some man who would not be suspected of doing work for them. They got this man, Macwan, and his cloak of a nationalist newspaper reporter served him well for some time. For the sake of the handsome sum of Rs. 400/- for sixteen meetings (see his deposition) he bluffed the police that he knew Marathi. He took leave with full pay from his paper, did the work of the police

and produced what he calls "something" of reports. And the Prosecution in all seriousness want in their turn to bluff the Court into believing an evidence based on and produced from nothing but bluff

I disclaim any responsibility for the speeches put in through this witness.

## 126. The help of the international proletariat to the strike

I will now take the question of the financing of the strike I have already mentioned the two big sums received from the Trade Unions in Russia for the relief of the strikers. The imperialist and nationalist bourgeois press made much propaganda against us, feeding the petty-bourgeois public on stories of how the Reds killed the bourgeoisie in the revolution and how the money received for the strike still carries the red colour of their blood. Many patriots and reactionary feudal landlords in the Assembly and elsewhere directly incited Government to stop this money from being delivered or to take action against us for receiving it

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The balance-sheet of income and expenditure of the Joint Strike Committee shows a total income of Rs. 1,11,527-9-11 from 7th May, 1928 to 31st January, 1929. The income and expenditure after October 4th, when the strike was called off, are merely re-adjustments and minor items. Out of this income Rs. 82,238-5-5 were from foreign contributions, and Rs. 26,383-6-3 from inland contributions. The balance of Rs. 2905-5-3 is something like cross entries, being refunds of tickets and sale of gunny bags bought with corn. This shows in the first place that the largest part of help for the strikers came from the European workers. Leaving aside the refunds etc., money from foreign contributions was 75.7 per cent and from inland 24.3 per cent of all contributions as such. For every rupee received from inside the country Rs. 3/- were received from the European workers.

The money came from different organisations of workers in Europe. Money was sent both by the Yellow and the Red organisations, as the Prosecution would like to classify them. It would appear from the accounts that the Yellows sent

Rs. 43,073-0-8 and the Reds Rs. 39,165-4-9 of the total of Rs. 82,238-5-5. This shows in the second place that the Reds alone were not desirous that the strikers should be helped in their struggle. The Yellows also wanted the strike to succeed, at that time at least. It may be noted that in the total of Rs. 82,238-5-5 mentioned above Rs. 17,660-11-0 were not received during this strike, but were the balance left over from the moneys received during the General Strike of 1925 in which none of the Communist here were participants. It would appear as if the innocent Yellow leaders had kept this balance ready for the coming strike of the "mischievous Reds!"

Now if we take the third test as to who from the Strike Committee, the Reds or the Yellows, received these moneys for the strikers, we find that Rs. 18,095-5-8 only passed through the hands of two of the accused here and Rs. 64,142-15-6 came through Mr. N. M. Joshi and his organisations. That is 78 per cent of the "financing" of the strike came through absolutely "safest for the Empire" hands.

While dealing with these figures it may be remembered that though these sums by themselves look very imposing in the poverty-stricken Indian conditions, where Relief and Charity Fund collections do not swell beyond a few thousands, their importance must not be exaggerated. The collections for the Bardoli peasants' fight which was proceeding parallel to the strike did not go beyond Rs. 2,00,000, when the whole of the nationalist bourgeoisie in all the provinces stood behind that movement with its men, money and press. We will be over-estimating the utility of this money if we lose sight of their relation to the wages and living of the workers who were put on relief. The relief operations began from June 12th and lasted for 114 days. The round sum of Rs. 95,000 spent on corn relief gives Rs. 833 per day, whereas the wages of the textile workers per day which they had ceased to receive amounted to Rs. 2,00,000. The relief distributed over all the workers comes to 248th part of their wages. These "tons of foreign money" against which the Government and the bourgeoisie shrieked do not give more than one pie to each worker who earned Rs. 1-6 per day on an average. If his family had consumed 2½ seers

of flour a day it was being offered now a homoeopathic wheat flour pill of near about one fourth a tola per day for the whole family! Even supposing that the whole money was spent on the 30,000 strikers only, who came to receive relief and were the neediest of all the workers, they received only a 38th part or pies 5 per head per day. Such a paltry sum can never explain and take the place of the self-sacrifice of the workers. It is not the tons of foreign money that encouraged the workers to fight vigorously for their demands, though it may be recognised that the help of the international working-class did render partial aid in saving the very needy from complete starvation and death in many a case.

Neither did this money play any part in aiding the organisational work of the strike. The organisational expenses of the Strike Committee were about Rs. 13,000 in round figures. The money collected inside India was double this sum, and even if the transport expenses of the exodus of the strikers from Bombay (Rs. 3,310-2-3) were not considered as a form of relief but as a part of organisational works, the total would still be far less than the inland collections. Without money coming from outside, the inland contributions would have fully covered our organisational expenses which certainly are one of the most important demands on the resources of a strike-leading organisation.

By this analysis about the source of the moneys received and its recipients, I am not trying to take any shelter behind the fact that even the most loyal-to-Imperialism organisation like the International Federation of Trade Unions and its affiliated organisations like the British Trade Union Congress or the International Federation of Textile Workers' Associations sent money to help the strikers, and the largest part of it through such an excellent Socialist and Trade Unionist like the Rt. Hon'ble Tom Shaw who has succeeded in reconciling his Socialism, which in words denounces war, with his War Ministership under Imperialism itself. The analysis shows partly the character of the strike of 1928 and the way it was being looked at by the world trade unions. The class-struggle of the Bombay Textile workers had not yet assumed a definite uncompromising form of class-war fought exclusively under the leadership and influence of the Red



Flag and all that it connotes. The workers had not yet ideologically, organisationally and practically taken the definite role of revolutionary trade unionism. The big trade union drive that burst forth after October 1928 was not visible in even the faintest symptoms before or during the strike and the sincere determined trade unionism of the Communists was treated as the exuberance of "rusticated college students" as the Times of India put it. Little had the pro-imperialist I.F.T.U. dreamt that soon a mighty wave of organisational activity unheard of before would be set in motion by the working-class in Bombay, just being awakened into class consciousness. The I.F.T.U. hoped to demolish the new leadership by financially propping up the Geneva heroes and making them appear before the workers as their saviours from hunger. Hence the great activity and sympathy shown by the I.F.T.U. and I.F.T.W.A. in sending money for the textile workers.

If the desire of the I.F.T.U. had been genuine, if it had only the idea of working for the success of the workers' strike, it would not have refused help to the strike in 1929 or allowed its largest constituent, the British T.U.C., to condemn the textile workers next year. But the I.F.T.U.'s pro-imperialist game was lost. After the strike of 1928 the Bombay Textile workers organically bound themselves on a large scale to what is signified by the Red Flag and naturally the I.F.T.U., the British T.U.C. and the I.F.T.W.A., which were so generous in the preceding years in their appeals for help to the Bombay workers, became louder in their shrieks of hatred next year. The Socialist Pacifist Tom Shaw, who previously was hurling bank drafts for the strike, was next year a War Minister—mobilising his "men-of-war" against the workers. But unfortunately for these gentlemen, class-war does not sail on bankdrafts nor does it halt for the armed pacifists who are pacifists in imperialist wars and armed against class-wars.

The complain of the Indian bourgeoisie against the Imperialist Government for allowing the money to come into India for the help of the strikers was quite justified. The bourgeoisie knew that the I.F.T.U. and the colonial working-

class cannot pull together for long; that we would soon break up with the Genevite sweet speakers and it also knew that the I.F.T.U will desert but the workers of the Soviet Union will not. And if the workers of the Soviet Union are allowed to help the colonial workers, where will the bourgeoisie be? Naturally if it had to live and also appear as the nationalist leaders of the working-class, it must break the Indian working-class away from the U.S.S.R., away from every militant section of the world proletariat. Hence it asked for and got the Public Safety Bill.

At the same time we were also justified in insisting on our right to take the help of the international proletariat. Capitalism had destroyed the national barriers by ramming down the Chinese walls of national isolation by its cheap commodity production, export of goods and capital. Imperialism, its next stage, by its world organisation of exploiting the working-class and peasantry, has created a world society. But it has also divided the whole world into two hostile camps, the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat. When the smallest part of this world bourgeoisie by its international contradictions threatens a collapse and thereby a danger to the world bourgeoisie, the most powerful sections of Imperialism act internationally to prop up the collapsing sector though the prop does not help to save it. For example the shortage of gold of the Bank of England calls in the help of the Federal Reserve Bank of the U.S.A. The bourgeoisie also co-operates internationally to suppress the colonial workers, as in China. As against this the world proletariat is bound to co-operate internationally, and if the working-class of India is attacked in its standards of wages, whose help is it to seek but that of the world proletariat and especially of the Soviet Union? All the weak capitalist nations run to the U.S.A., the banker of the world bourgeoisie, for help. All the oppressed workers of the world naturally run for help to the U.S.S.R., the banker of freedom for the world proletariat. Possessing political power, experience, the resources of a vast country, the Soviet Union is the best fitted to help the world proletariat. In our need are we to ask help from the victorious working-class of the U.S.S.R. or from the bankers of the U.S.A.? The Central Council of Trade Unions of the

U.S.S.R. the Red International of Labour Unions, is for us what the Council of the International Chamber of Commerce is for the world bourgeoisie with this difference that the latter suffers from cut-throat competition within itself and is the organ of a declining class while the former has no internal contradictions and is the organ of the advancing class. Knowing this the Indian bourgeoisie tries to break the solidarity of the Indian workers with those of other countries and especially with those of the U.S.S.R.; and knowing this we have to stand and work for the maintenance of this solidarity. It can never be destroyed by laws of banishment, prohibition of entry to money and fraternal delegates into India from the workers of other countries, because that solidarity is grounded on the organisation of modern world economy.

**127. Inland help to the strike—collections in Bombay, Poona, Ahmedabad etc.—the Congress help**

Our insistence to retain international solidarity will be clearer when some attention is paid to the attitude of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie towards the relief funds of the strikers. I have already referred to the pious advice of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mr. C.F. Andrews and Sadhus of their ilk. The nationalist bourgeoisie is not opposed to receiving foreign money from any source as such. It does not want the Indian workers to get help from the international proletariat and especially from that of the Soviet Union. The nationalist bourgeois is jubilant at the prospect of dollars and francs if they come for his toyfight with Imperialism. When the rouble was crashing in value in 1920, he bought the rouble—the Red rouble—and speculated heavily on it; and one member of their class was ludicrous enough to institute a suit in the court of British Imperialism against the Soviet Union asking for redemption of the paper roubles he held. But the bourgeoisie would not like the workers to receive roubles to relieve them of hunger. Such an attitude would have had some show of justification if the nationalist bourgeoisie had itself rendered help. It not only did not render help but even sabotaged any being given; and the leadership of this sabotage belonged to

the big bosses of the National Congress including Mahatma Gandhi.

The Strike Committee organised street collections of relief money from the shopkeepers and the petty-bourgeoisie in Bombay and elsewhere and from the workers in Bombay and outside. In every place it was met with opposition from the nationalist bourgeoisie.

The nearest to us were the workers in other industries and unions, whom we approached for help, and some collections on pay-day were made by our volunteers at the gates of factories. We also approached individual Trade Unions in Bombay and some help was obtained from them. But the low wages of the colonial workers prevent them from accumulating big reserves of funds in their Unions, which besides being young are attacked from all sides and not allowed to grow. Therefore the help from these sources was small though not poor. Then we tackled the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sections which were not directly under the influence of the textile capitalists. The Citizens' Relief Committee, working mostly under the direction and influence of Mr. N. M. Joshi and his people of the Servants of India Society, was organised in August 1928 in a meeting at the Servants of India Society. This Committee collected a small amount from the merchants and petty traders. In a young bourgeoisie, as we find in the colonies, a highly sensitive class consciousness of the interest of its class as a whole as against another class has not penetrated to all its various sections, as it has done in the Capitalism of the U.S.A. or England. Therefore we meet with such aberrations as a 'Grain Dealers' Association paying a thousand rupees to the Strike Relief Fund through this Committee. However such aberrations were few. Generally the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois were hostile to the relief fund and naturally so. They certainly were not going to aid a class war against their own class interest. During the next six months, this class outlook grew so strong and organised, that not a single aberration of the kind mentioned above was found in the attitude of the whole of the Bombay bourgeoisie towards the strike in 1929.

Next we approached the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. This body has of late boasted very much of its interest in the masses and has said that the workers should throng into its ranks and make it their own so that it can wholly look to their welfare. Now the workers have no time to waste in making experiments each year, to measure how far the Congress has moved towards the workers and away from the bourgeoisie. Our experience has confirmed our statement that the workers can never capture this bourgeois stronghold by votes and elections. Can the workers capture the mills and banks of the bourgeoisie by votes? Certainly not. It is something like that with the Congress also. In 1928 we possessed nearly half the votes on the B.P.C.C. and the General Secretary was ours, while most of the Sub-Committees had a majority of our members. In all the meetings, where the interests of the bourgeoisie were not touched, where financial help except for the benefit of the financial ring in control was not asked, the members left the working majority to us and were slack. But when we asked money for the Strike Relief Fund and held meetings for it the game of sabotage was started. They lured away many of the young men that generally supported us and prevented a quorum being formed (Exhibit reference of speeches.) Ultimately by several manoeuvres we succeeded in holding the meeting. Shamelessly enough some of the members, who were the hirelings of the pro-Shaukat Ali groups, wanted to sanction money with the proviso of communal distribution which we refused. Then they wanted to come themselves with their petty contribution of Rs. 3,000/- and distribute it personally. We were not going to consent to a parallel organisation to function in the strike area and then allow it to become a source of dissensions. In order to hush up our opposition in public and denunciation of their bourgeois character, at last a sum was sanctioned. Then the bureaucracy sabotaged the handing over of the money. The treasurer had no money! The cheques had to be obtained from the Trust Committee, which first must decide for itself, if it had any margin at all to pay for this extra demand, not budgeted for

before. Thus things dragged on for days. The B.P.C.C. which had written off thousands of rupees, given out to questionable characters posing as Khadi merchants and producers, had invested large sums of its Swaraj Fund collections in foreign goods stores (for example the Ashoka Swadeshi Stores Ltd.) and Motor Car Companies because the directors of the Fund were the directors of these companies, sabotaged relief being given to the strikers. With the self same coterie still in control of the Congress, we are told that it has now suddenly become a Congress of workers. Can the Congress dominated by the agents of Fazalbhoy and Birlas ever be a Congress of the wage slaves of Fazalbhoy and Birlas? Impossible.

Were we not aware of the nature of the Congress and of the petty-bourgeoisie? Why then did we ask help from them, if we did not expect them to help? Because we wanted them to expose themselves by their own actions before the workers. It is never sufficient that the few conscious workers should know the behaviour and attitude of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The whole working-class must be convinced, by actual experience of their own, about the correctness of our attitude. The sabotaging activities of the bureaucracy of the Congress helped us to secure this experience for the workers.

We also sent delegations to Poona and Ahmedabad to collect money and win support for the strike. In Ahmedabad they met Mahatma Gandhi personally and requested him to render help through his Union. His first and foremost statement was (Reference exhibit speech P. 1702): "I am not convinced that the workers are in the right. How can I help them?" That revealed the bourgeois in him. He did not begin by doubting the bourgeoisie. But he started with the assumption that the workers were wrong and that is what the bourgeois does. Our delegation left him to his prayers and his mill-owners and went straight over his head to the workers in Ahmedabad directly. They collected there Rs. 5863-6-3.

So who ultimately came to the rescue of the Bombay workers in their starvation and strike? The Bombay Municipality made fun of their suffering, patriots of the Congress sabotaged our attempt to secure money; the Mahatma presumed the workers to be in the wrong. What did the mill-owners do? They asked the imperialist armed forces to help them in forcibly opening the mills, got our volunteers arrested and sent to prison, clamoured for our arrest, the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill, joined hands with Imperialism against the workers. Thus the bourgeoisie was pro-imperialist and its patriotic agents hid their likeness with their creators—the bourgeoisie—under a padding of coarse khaddar. But unfortunately for them Marxism is a powerful enough ray to tear the veil. In 1926 the Gauhati Congress had passed a resolution favouring the workers and peasants. In 1931 we find Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru telling the Bombay workers that the Congress will side with the workers in a dispute between them and the capitalists. But when the class-war actually begins, the workers find these pandits on the other side of the barricade, ready to render the only service they can do, that is to appoint Inquiry Committees to determine whether the patriotic and most swadeshi mill-owner had or had not telephoned for the armed forces to come and beat the women workers assembled before the mill-gates to demand their dues. (Example of a latest case in Bombay.) It is only the international working-class that sincerely helped the Bombay workers. The Russian, British, German and other workers in the foreign countries, and Indian workers at home together gave 94 per cent of the total relief money for their comrade strikers. It was this solid objective experience that taught the workers the slogan "Workers of the world unite"—it is this that convinced them that along with Imperialism must be abolished the Indian bourgeoisie also and that the fight will be carried on by the workers and peasants organised in their own class organisation and not under the leadership of the "tax-gatherers of Imperialism" like the bosses of the Congress.

**SECTION 3—The organisation of the Girni Kamgar Union and events up to March 1929: paras 128-141**

- 128. Small revolt against the October agreement—Ex. P. 966—the task after the strike—competitors of the G.K.U.—volunteers and the Union—Ex. P. 967 and P. 929.**

The strike was called off by a monster meeting held in the Nagu Sayaji Wadi on 5th October 1928, where the agreement arrived at on the previous day with the mill-owners was explained. Tremendous enthusiasm prevailed and the agreement was endorsed by the workers. Almost every prominent member of the Joint Strike Committee of both the wings was present and spoke in the meeting. A handbill over the signatures of the Joint Secretaries of the Committee was also issued explaining the terms. It is a fact that the agreement did not remove the rational system—the three-loom and two-frame system—from the Sassoon, Finlay and Koh-i-Noor Mills. Nearly ten thousand workers who were directly hit by the system remained dissatisfied; and had every reason to revolt against the agreement, which they did. When on Monday morning 6th October, the mills were reopened and the workers in these groups found that they had to work under the old rational system, they considered themselves betrayed. They came out and started a campaign to close down the mills again. Herein was going to be the test of the new leaders of the workers. In former days and even today in many cases where the reformist leadership is predominant, the rule was that when an unfavourable agreement in any respect was repudiated by the workers, the leaders decamped and refused to face the fury of the dissatisfied workers. We could not afford to do this. We had to stay with the workers, we belonged to them wholly and solely. Therefore we went straight into the meetings of the dissatisfied workers and explained to them how the system could not be overthrown. The workers had held out for nearly six months, the mill-owners had agreed to the demands of almost all the workers excepting the Sassoon section and in the present conditions it was impossible to continue the struggle any longer on that sole issue.



But if they insisted upon continuing the struggle we were bound to carry out their mandate; our signatures over the agreement had no value by themselves. Any agreement entered into in the name of the rank and file must be endorsed by the rank and file. If they refused to endorse it must be scrapped. We had given our definite opinion and lead that work ought to be resumed. But in order to measure the exact extent of the resistance, we issued the handbill—Ex. P. 966. The Prosecution claim that this handbill shows that immediately after we had settled the strike, we wanted to stop the mills from working normally and therefore called upon the workers to start boycott of some of the mills. This handbill was also brought as an exhibit by the mill-owners before the Fawcett Inquiry Committee of 30/10/28 and is printed in their proceedings at page 113 (Ex. D. 523). The mill-owners argued exactly as the Prosecution argue now. An this action proves the identity of thought of the Indian bourgeoisie in Bombay and the Prosecution here, and confirms the statement of Spratt that this case is a strike-breaking Prosecution and nothing else. However this handbill does not lend itself to the interpretation of the Prosecution. It did not call upon the workers to continue the strike, though we would not have hesitated to do so if necessary. The question form of the sentence at the top which they have failed to notice itself shows this. It was a question, as I have said, to measure the extent of the resistance to the agreement in order to aid us in deciding our line of action. The response to this handbill as we expected was negligible. After one or two meetings it became clear that the Sassoon workers also were exhausted and the majority of them were unwilling and unable to continue the struggle at that moment just then. This was quite natural. They had been the first victims of rationalisation and had been fighting for over one year. Within four days the agreement had been accepted on all sides and accepted with thorough understanding. The greatest factor in bringing about this result was the fact that the workers found that here was a leadership that was not going to desert their struggle, though it might have to face ups and downs in that process.

The resumption of work confronted us with greater tasks and new problems. The experience of the world proletariat had taught

us that Capitalism, when forced to make concessions or withdraw its attacks on the wages and hours of workers, tries to nullify them by devious ways, unless the leadership is vigilant and organisation strong. The agreement of 4th October contained three soft spots, wherein we were sure the mill-owners would try to drive in spikes to break the gains of the strike. One was the elasticity of the clause of restoring wages and conditions of March 1927, the second was that the question of musters would not be raised.

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The third was the payment of fixed rates of wages for the provisional period of October and November till full work commenced on older rates, after the machinery and equipment had been set in proper order for work. The mill-owners' tactics of depriving the workers of the gains of the strike through these soft spots, two of which were in fact the essential demands at the root of the General Strike, could not commence in October. Because the workers who had gone back to their villages did not return till the third week of October. But smaller complaints of victimisation did begin to pour in and we had to set up an organisation to deal with them and therefrom arose the organisational work of the Girmi Kamgar Union.

As has been stated, the G.K.U. was founded on 22nd May 1928 during the General Strike, under circumstances which have been fully shown elsewhere. During the strike the Union as such did not function, except in so far as it was a participant in the Joint Strike Committee. All meetings, picketing, relief distribution etc., were done in the name of the Strike Committee, though the moderate group of Mr. N. M. Joshi took care to mention, wherever it could, that the foreign remittances for relief were received by the Bombay Textile Labour Union and were contributed by that Union to the Strike Committee. During the strike the G.K.U. income from May to October was Rs. 88-12-0. When the strike was over, though the Strike Committee, composed of three unions, continued to exist, the three unions began to separately build up their own organisations. The Bombay Textile Labour Union had a ready-made apparatus,

which so far as its office work went, was well organised. That Union had been working since 1926 and its first year of report showed 6,000 membership with Rs. 17,000 as collections. The second annual report showed 4,000 members with Rs. 12,000 collections (A.I.T.U. Bulletin, October 1928). When it started competition with us it had Rs. 13,000 to back it up, for centre offices in the mill area and a paid office staff. Our Union had no centre offices except the Head Office whose rent also was in arrears. We had committed ourselves to pay Rs. 2,000 for relief grain as our contribution, when the money for relief distribution in the last week of the strike fell short. So while our debts were over Rs. 2,000, we had Rs. 14 to our credit with our treasurer. But we had one thing which our rivals had not got. We had the immense strength of a revolutionary theory and a scientific faith in the creative capacity of the proletariat. On such foundation and Rs. 14 we started to build up the G.K.U., backed up by the additional credit of our work during a victorious strike. In our lectures during the strike, we had already from time to time emphasised the necessity of a strong union embracing the majority of workers with an efficient staff and volunteer corps. Accordingly we issued on 12th October 1928 a handbill (P. 967) explaining to the workers how and to whom they should pay subscriptions, the necessity for raising a substantial fund and a cadre of organisers to push up organisational work. This handbill also had been used by the mill-owners against us before the Fawcett Committee and the same is now being brought in this case.

The Prosecution have raised a tremendous structure over this handbill and the scheme of volunteers' and speakers' corps outlined therein. The Committing Magistrate says: "This provision of an army is an unusual feature of Trade Union propaganda but from the point of view of the revolutionary it is an eminently sound proposal." The Magistrate also quotes a handbill (P. 929) issued by me on 12th December 1928.

The programme outlined in these two handbills, contains nothing very serious to warrant the remarks of the Magistrate or the use of it made by the Prosecution. The Prosecution have raised

a structure of a revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the British Empire. But to unearth a conspiracy extending over several years and not to find an "army to wage war" would make the Government look disgraceful and discomfited. An army or at least plans of raising one is an absolute necessity in such a conspiracy extending over three continents and aimed at the overthrow of the mightiest Empire on earth. Now for four years the secret Police careered over the whole world for documents but they had to find some army in India ready to pounce on the King's sovereignty. Otherwise the drama would be without any romance. Having found the roots of the conspiracy at Moscow, the Prosecution should not have been so very anxious to unearth a Red Army in India! They should have contented themselves with the Soviet Red Army and our appreciation of the heroism of that body. But the subtle legal brains refused to consider the conspiracy quite complete, until some Red Army drilling right down here under the very nose of Imperialism and shaking the beer bottles of the imperialist bureaucracy by its heavy march were found; and after a tremendous search of six hours of the offices of the Girni Kamgar Union they found these two handbills. Well, if you cannot find the Red Army, the next best is an army of Red handbills. At least the whole Red Army had vanished, perhaps converted into "invisibles" and bottled up in the three mysterious bottles of tincture iodine for First Aid, (another army apparatus!) found with Spratt. The handbills were seized and exhibited, for do they not actually contain the words "Red Army"?

Anybody who is not previously told that these handbills are issued by some terrible conspirators and are valuable evidence to show that these conspirators were raising a Red Army like the Bolsheviks to overthrow the Empire will not take these leaflets for anything more than what they actually say, i.e. the call for a volunteer corps and a staff of worker-speakers and organisers for the organisation of the Union.

### **129. The functions of Red Trade Union Volunteers**

The Magistrate thinks that it is an unusual feature for a trade union to have such an army or corps but he thinks it a sound proposal from the point of view of the revolutionary. I do not think that to have a volunteer corps or to call it a Red Army or to dress it in Red clothes is a revolutionary act. It is the function discharged by that body which would make it a revolutionary or otherwise. Almost every institution in India or in the world maintains some sort of volunteer corps. And if a coloured dress or badge and the word 'Army' were sufficient, the most reactionary Salvation Army would have been the most revolutionary body. I do not put the G.K.U. on par with the Salvation Army. What I mean is that mere names and descriptions do not help. It is the actual task carried out that makes one revolutionary or reactionary. The task allotted to the volunteers that were to be raised was definitely laid down in the handbill. A trade union if it is to function properly on a wide area must have a volunteer corps. They are required for picketing, for keeping order at meetings, for acting as couriers from mill to mill in emergency times and to defend the union, its offices and workers from murderous attacks of the Police and its henchmen. The most important of all is the last task. These were purely defensive and trade union tasks and the handbills do not say anything beyond this—only it is said in a forceful manner.

British Imperialism allows only reactionary organisations in India to have even armed volunteer corps. Every European and Anglo-Indian in India is an armed man flourishing his revolver at the poor workers and peasants that he meets with. Hunting and shooting parties of idle Magistrates, Bank Managers and business men trample over fields and forests arms in hand and many a time shoot a peasant in place of a deer and escape with a fine of a few rupees for a human life. But if the poor peasant were to enter the forest for a piece of fuel wood without a permit, he would straight off be marched to jail. British, American and Australian tourists roam about the country with arms in hand in a disarmed country and shoot rickshaw coolies (as in the famous Simla case) and ekka-drivers (as in the recent Madras case) for demanding larger

fare of a few annas. The law of the bourgeoisie and its bourgeois administrators negotiate compensation in money value of the lost life of the poor worker. But when an infuriated peasantry harassed by famine and taxation kills a zamindar, a planter or a Magistrate, the armed forces of Imperialism, aided by its corps, shoot and hang hundreds of the peasants for one life of an exploiter. The working-class and the peasantry have no protection of law or of the State, because the State and the law belong to their enemies—the imperialists and the bourgeoisie. Naturally the working-class and peasantry have to organise their own machinery of protection against the armed White Terror. Such a machinery in the circumstances of the Girni Kamgar Union could only take the form of a volunteer corps.

As such the functions of Red volunteers are quite different from those of the bourgeoisie. The volunteers of the reactionary organisations, like that of the Salvation Army, and scouts of the Powell breed, are auxiliary forces of Imperialism against the movement of national freedom, and against the workers and peasants. In times of strikes and acute national struggles, they play the role of the murderers of workers and peasants, as was shown by the role of the Kitchener Corps in the G.I.P. Railway strike, the Territorials, and the Anglo-Indian Rifle Clubs. The functions of the Red Volunteers are also different from those of the Congress and such other organisations. The Congress volunteers are not given the task of protecting the people. For this the volunteers are not to be blamed. Some of them personally have shown the highest heroism, like any soldier of the Revolution. But the effect of their heroism is not to further the cause of National freedom but make peace with the exploiters, because the Congress bourgeoisie uses their heroism for compromise and sabotage of the struggle of the youths, workers and peasants. In the innumerable massacres that the Police have carried out of the peasants in U.P., the volunteers of the Congress were sent under command of respectable leaders with an ambulance car and the slogan of peace and surrender, after the Imperialist Police have shot and looted the peasantry.

The functions of the volunteers of the militant trade unions must be quite different from these. In the first place our corps is

definitely built on class lines, the men being drawn from the working-class in the towns (and the poor peasantry in the villages). Secondly our volunteers are out to carry out the needs of the class-war and not of class peace. Thirdly our volunteers are under the control and command of the class leadership of the workers. Necessarily some more features arise from this.

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The Trade Union volunteers or Red volunteers must not be mixed with elements from the petty-bourgeoisie. They must be from the class-conscious ranks. The workers are not afraid of discipline and we do not hesitate to maintain it. The Red volunteers must be equipped with whatever weapons are possible in the present circumstances of the country, and must not hesitate to use them in order to protect workers' demonstrations, meetings, offices of organisations, working-class houses, men, women and children. But the use of force if necessary must be done with care and precision. Though we are not pledged to non-violence, we are not out for the use of violence in each and every case. Such use for example was justified when the hireling Pathans of the Oil Companies began to loot shops and workers' quarters in Bombay. Such use was justified when the Pathans attacked the head office of our Union in February 1929. In that period of organisation such use had to be purely of a defensive character. The Red volunteers must become a tower of strength and confidence to the workers. Every Red volunteer must know his locality and must become the organiser of protection for the poor workers, men and women, from the violence of money-lenders and the harassment of the landlords and the police. But it is also necessary to carefully distinguish between the separate clashes which are erratic manifestations of class-war, the general line of class-war, from the individual quarrels. The working-class as a whole is exploited and abused every hour of its life. The bourgeoisie as a class practises violence and terror against the workers at every step. Therefore there exists continuous class-struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working-class. In this struggle, the factory managers and supervisors administer the bourgeois law inside the

factory, and ill-treat the workers. When the workers' consciousness is just beginning to rise and organisation is not yet strong, the workers resist such ill-treatment by attacks and physical violence against the factory bosses. However justified such resistance may be because of the oppression, the Red volunteers cannot assist the workers in carrying out such actions on the ground of defending the class. They have to prevent such attempts. But the method of prevention must not be the Gandhian method, which asks the furious peasants, who have carried out such an action to surrender and be killed by the police. Our method is to explain to the workers the futility of such attacks and to explain to them the superiority of class-struggle as a whole. Similarly in individual quarrels on personal grounds or minor bickerings unconnected with the general grievances, the Red volunteers must try for restraint and retain peace. In fact there can be no hard and fast rules showing where they should resist with their strength and where they should not, for separate situations. But such a corps is an absolute necessity in a colonial country, overridden with feudal conditions, where most innocent gatherings and demonstrations of workers are attacked by the police and the men of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, money-lenders and factory goondas.

The Red volunteers in villages also have to carry out a similar work. The Congress volunteer under the guidance of bourgeois leadership is made to act as the revenue tax-gatherer of the Government and the zamindars and to squeeze the peasantry in the interest of the zamindars under the false excuse of the truthful observation of an untruthful Pact. The Red volunteer acts exactly contrary to this. He develops the existing class-struggle according to the form suitable for his province or place. He does not squeeze the peasants' money to save the zamindar and help class peace. Under the present conditions class peace means peaceful exploitation by Imperialism of the workers and peasants. The bourgeois leadership uses the Congress volunteers to maintain class peace, that is to maintain exploitation. The Red volunteers are directed to overthrow exploitation, which naturally means not class peace but class-war.



The Red volunteers cannot take part in the reformist manoeuvres of the Congress bosses, to sidetrack the energies of the militant self-sacrificing volunteers into the work of picketing liquor shops and foreign cloth. We must fraternise with the Congress volunteers, who are under the influence of the bourgeoisie of the village rich, since these volunteers are actually poor peasants and land workers. We can join hands with them or draw them on to our side in a work like that of no-rent campaign, resistance to compulsory labour, mass demonstration and defend the peasants property and household from the exploiters.

The control and command of such work and the volunteer corps must lie with the class organisations concerned. It must be remembered here that I am not speaking of the Communist Party organisations, but of Trade Unions and peasant organisations. The command of all such corps must be proletarian both in the towns and in the countries. If this care is not taken, then the most self-sacrificing and fighting elements from the proletariat and peasantry commanded by the Congress bourgeoisie, the shopkeepers, merchants and fashionable youths, who hanker more after the romance of the "movies" than the grim class struggle, are used by the bourgeoisie to fight in the interests of the bourgeoisie and the zamindars and against the interests of the fighters themselves. For example, Babu Genu who died of Satyagrah under a lorry of foreign cloth in Bombay was himself a worker. His heroic death increased the sale of Swadeshi Cloth, and the Bombay mill-owners did double shift work. But as soon as the pact was signed and trade slacked a bit, it was the comrades of Babu Genu himself, the textile workers, that were thrown out of employment. The bourgeoisie that negotiated for a democratic constitution on the strength of the millions of Babu Genus in India is not prepared to give, in that constitution or even in the present Municipal Government, a democratic franchise to the Babu Genus because they have no property and do not pay high rents to qualify themselves to vote and sit with the rich bourgeoisie.

It was not an unusual feature to have volunteer corps for Trade Unions in Bombay or any other place at that. The G. K. Mahamandal had its volunteer corps and it did work in the 1925

textile strike. The Bombay Textile Labour Union had one of its own. The Joint Strike Committee had also a corps to do picketing and other work during the strike of 1928. So when the G.K.U. began its work, it was quite natural for it to have volunteers for its work.

But our volunteers were not going to follow the tradition of the previous ones. We wanted them to do proletarian class work, the work of the Trade Unions as such. It means that we did not want them to lend their services to communal meetings or demonstrations, celebrations of the anniversaries of feudal kings of the old times or heroes of this or that religion. We had found that the volunteers of the Union, that had preceded us in the textile industry, had indulged in this sort of thing, which ought to be foreign to the Trade Unions of the true type. In order to stamp our corps with quite a different tradition, a tradition which is rich with the history of the international proletariat, we used to describe our volunteers as Red Army, Red Corps etc. But because we used these epithets, it would be ridiculous to argue that we were organising a real Red Army. It would be also ridiculous to argue that we were trying to build up a Red Army by merely issuing handbills and cloth belts. We were neither creating a bogus Red Army by painting white shirts in red, "to save in washing," as the militant hero of the Congress bourgeoisie Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has said regarding his "red shirts." (The true Red Shirts should have protested against such an imbecile explanation of their historically heroic uniform.) Nor were we creating a real Red Army at that stage. The epithets we used simply to demarcate ourselves from the traditions of the previous corps, which worked on anything but proletarian class lines. However we could not fulfil the programme till the time of our arrest. This is evidenced by my complaint in the handbill of December 1928, P. 929. We had not raised more than a hundred men and those too were not all according to our ideas of highest standards. This was due mainly to the fact that the G.K.U. was never given time to carry out this programme by the several strikes that were being forced on the workers between October 1928 and March 1929.

**130. Complaints about violation of the agreement by the mill-owners—the 71 individual mill strikes after October—were they incited by us?**

In October the largest number of complaints arose on the question of re-engaging those workers who were working in April 1928 when the strike began. Though there was no specific clause about it in the agreement it was understood in the discussions. It was also understood that though in the agreement the daily advances to be paid according to schedule were liable to be adjusted according to piece or fixed rates and work done, the adjustments would not be made and the mill-owners would forego deductions to be made in the cases of overpayment. In the whole of the industry, the wages bill of the workers on attendance roll was more by several thousands, according to the daily rate of advances than it would have been according to the prevailing schedules of wages. The mill-owners intended to deduct the overpayment advances from the next month's wages, which we refused to allow; and they agreed to it. Similarly several mills refused to re-engage workers who came back very late in October or even in November. We had to get their places reserved till the end of October and there also we succeeded. We had to go through more than five thousand complaints in October of this type and got them satisfactorily settled in the majority of cases.

The organisational results from such success were magical. As soon as the two weeks' payment was made workers rushed in thousands to the office of the G.K.U. to pay their subscriptions. We did not expect such a rush. Never in the history of Bombay Unions had anyone met with such a rush and therefore having no previous experience to rely upon we had not kept ready any staff to meet the situation. But immediately after the first two weeks' experience we decided to open six centres (that is sub-offices) of the Union in various localities. Each centre was given in-charge of a responsible member of the Union, with paid clerks, organisers etc. (Resolution of the Managing Committee of 16/10/28, Ex. P. 958.) An account was opened in the Imperial

Bank of India in the name of the Union and operated upon by any three of the five officers of the Union authorised to do so. Such authority was vested by a resolution of the Managing Committee in the President—A. Alwe, Vice President—R. S. Nimbkar, Joint Treasurers—B. T. Alwe and S. V. Ghate and the General Secretary—myself (16/10/28). That a vast organisation was springing up was clear from the fact that though the workers had been on strike for six months, yet they recognised the claim of the Union as the first upon their poor earnings of the first 2 or 3 weeks. All the workers had not yet come back and the mills were not working in full capacity. Still our October collections were Rs. 6794/- that is on the basis of 4 annas per member we had over 27,000 members, one-third of the total number of workers that had returned to work.

The workers, contrary to all expectations of the mill-owners, showed quite a new spirit of initiative. They were not going to tolerate any longer the insults from the mill bureaucracy. Bribery, abuses, beating etc. were resented, resisted and even retaliated. This had a very panicky effect on the bureaucracy which lived so long on bribery and extra exploitation, apart from the one carried on by Capitalism in the ordinary process of production.

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The bureaucracy tried to resort to its old method of terrorism. The first and easiest method was worked through the clause, "The question of musters shall not arise" in the agreement. We interpreted this clause to mean that the particular mill may not engage exactly the same worker it had on a particular job. A shifting of labour from mill to mill was allowed, and thus the musters, so far as specific individuals were concerned, may become quite different from what they were in April 1928. The mill-owners refused to accept this interpretation. To them it meant a right to retain as many workers on a particular job as they liked. They virtually claimed the right to carry out retrenchment as per their standard scheme, which however was yet a subject

matter of dispute according to the agreement. So in many cases where they had four men per frame of spindles they retained only 2. Several mills asked some of their departments to work longer hours which also was a subject matter of dispute. By the agreement all matters of dispute arising from it were to be submitted to the Fawcett Committee. This Committee was appointed by the Government on 13th October 1928 and began its public sittings on 29th October. On 31st October we submitted before them some of the important disputes, as many as 12, and the Committee ruled 10 of them in our favour. But at the same time it called the Director of Information, Mr. Jennings to give his views on the interpretation of the muster clause. After his evidence the Committee upheld the mill-owners' interpretation which became one of the causes of the lightning strikes. Already the workers had made three strikes in different mills and had forced favourable agreements out of the mill-owners. When the mills began work full steam, the century-old class nature of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie rose up and began to attack in a very cunning manner the wages and rates of the workers. They attacked the fixed wage-earners through the muster clause. The piece workers in weaving were attacked in a more ingenious way. They gave them the old sorts of 1927 with a changed number and fixed a lower rate per pound than what it was in 1927. Or they got out quite a new sort under the old number and paid the same rate, though the changes in the warp, weft, etc. required a higher rate. When the workers questioned, they kept on repeating that everything was what it was in March 1927 according to the agreement. One mill, Shapurji Bharucha, was impudent enough to introduce the rational system in direct breach of the agreement and had to withdraw it when the Fawcett Committee upheld our objection. The workers by such actions on the part of the mill-owners were becoming convinced that the 5½ months of a General Strike in the industry and a solemn agreement had not changed the bureaucracy. Naturally the workers were forced into direct action of individual mill strikes, wherever a grievance

cropped up. They began to build up their mill committees and departmental leaders in each mill. The highest possible pitch of vigilance on the rates, the material supplied, the fines, the conduct of officers etc. was instituted. The general result was that bribery, assaults, cheating and such other forms of exploitation began to be reduced. The mill bureaucracy became weakened and in many places its terror completely smashed. The workers regained confidence and organised with greater determination and intelligence. The following table shows how the months of November and December were the hardest fought, though as yet the workers had not taken a full meal of a full month's wages.

Number of strikes:

Month		Success- ful	Unsuccess- ful	Comprom- ised*	Undecided	Total
October	1928	2	0	1	0	3
November	„	11	7	2	0	20
December	„	10	12	2	0	24
January	1929	2	5	0	0	7
February	„	7	1	0	0	8
March	„	0	6	0	3*	9
Total		32	31	5	3	71

\*The undecided 3 merged in the General Strike of 1929 April.

Thus out of 71 disputes as many as 44 (62 per cent) took place in November and December. As regards the results, if the "compromises" are added on to the "successfuls" and those that were left undecided in March till our arrest are omitted from consideration, we find to have won 37 out of 68 strikes, a 54.4 per cent success. I have already referred to a remark of the Fawcett Committee that all the individual mill strikes prior to April 1928 were lost. But when the workers began to organise according to our methods, they not only won the General Strike, stopped rationalisation and wage-cuts, but they also won against the underhand attacks begun soon after the big strike by the

bourgeoisie, who thought the workers were too exhausted to resist immediately. In fact we won almost every important strike. Though the percentage of success is actually 54.4 per cent on the total number of disputes, the losses were not so serious as the gains. Many of the strikes lost were not in fact strikes in the real sense. Some of them were due to misunderstanding. Such strikes were at once called off by us without hesitation and did not last for more than a day or two. The reformists and imperialists charge us with inciting meaningless strikes without any reasons. But such a charge is absolutely unfounded. From October 1928 to March 1929 we had occasions to advise an immediate liquidation of some of the small strikes, when we found that there was no immediate grievance that would not be removed by a simple negotiation. While doing this we have not at all given up our principles or deviated from a correct attitude towards the strikes. While writing about strikes the Third Congress of the C.I. says, "our organisational activity must not lay itself bare to the accusation of stirring and inciting the workers to nonsensical strikes and other inconsiderate actions." (Exh. P. 2396). The large majority of these 71 strikes were not nonsensical or inconsiderate, and where there appeared to be the slightest reason to suppose that they were so, they had to be liquidated, though in some instances they inflicted some amount of humiliation on the Union at the hands of the mill-owners. However such occasions are bound to occur during the progress of the rising proletariat that has begun to learn initiative and to create its own militant leadership from its rank and file committees and groups. When such mistakes occurred we did not disown or denounce the men *before the mill-owners*, but fought against their being used by the bosses as levers to demoralise the workers, though *before the workers* themselves we had to expose the mistakes ruthlessly and criticise them. And that is what every trade unionist, I think, must do, if he is to build up an intelligent and disciplined working-class leadership.

**131. The agreements and wage increases secured through the small strikes—the formation of mill committees**

The agreements arrived at between us and the mill-owners will show that the most hard fought strikes were completely justified. They prove that the mill-owners had introduced lower rates for new varieties of cloth and had embarked on retrenchment. Some of these agreements are on record as defence exhibits, (D 432), while some are to be found in the files of the Union brought here in search. The longest of these strikes was that in the Koh-i-Noor Mills (30th November to 26th December 1928). The agreement arrived at between this mill and ourselves is the longest and most exhaustive one on record. The agreement shows that in December 1928, there existed attempts on the part of the capitalist bureaucracy to receive bribes, to assault the workers and forfeit wages. On weaving rates some of the typical increases are shown below:

Mill	Average increases on New Sorts secured by our agreements	Dates
1. Manekji Petit	6%	21-11-28
2. Morarjee Gokaldas	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ %	24-11-28
3. New Great Eastern	17 $\frac{1}{4}$ %	26-11-28
4. 9 Mills of Curnimbhoy Group	2%	5-12-28
5. Moon Mill	7 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	7-12-28
6. Framji Petit	11%	9-12-28
7. Simplex	17%	-12-28
8. Koh-i-Noor	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ %	26-12-28

Apart from these increases in wage rates there are several agreements restoring to retrenchment of workers, cancelling increased hours of working introduced in some of the departments without a corresponding increase in the wages.

In passing we may note here a fact which will show the character of the patriotism of the national industry for which the workers are asked to sacrifice. An examination of the agreements



will show the rates paid on *khadi* weaving. For example, our agreements with the New Great Eastern Mill and Framji Petit Mill, show rates to be paid on *khadi* cloth and *khadi dhoties*. In one case, which the specification was  $52'' \times 24$  yards  $\times 14\frac{1}{2}$  pounds, we got the rates raised from three pies per pound to four pies, an increase of  $33\frac{1}{3}$ rd per cent. In another mill the rate was raised from 4 pies to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  pies per pound for the specification  $44 \times 24 \times 11$ . More instances can be found in the agreements in D 432. Now it is well-known that Communists are opposed to the *khaddar* movement as a plank in the political platform of the National Emancipation Movement. The grounds for this position have been stated before in para 102. The attitude of the mill-owners and the Indian bourgeoisie is contradictory to ours. The whole of the Indian bourgeoisie including the textile mill-owners applaud Gandhiji for this *khaddar* movement. Because it advertises *Swadeshi* and consequently the goods of the Indian mills. Hundreds of times complaints have appeared from the sincere but misguided *Khaddarites* that the Indian mills manufacture cheap *Khaddar* and sell it, thus killing the trade of "genuine" *khaddar*. The Bombay *khaddar* interests who have invested thousands (not from their pockets but from the loans given for good from the enormous Congress funds) and who are in league with the Indian mill-owners, in reply to these complaints have always charged the Japanese merchants for doing such treacherous business. The Indian mill-owners also solemnly affirm that they never have any intention of making profits from sale of mill *khaddar* by taking advantage of the *Khaddar* Movement, and the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Congress, tied as they are to the chariot wheel of the bourgeoisie, utter simply dark warnings against the sinful mill-owners who protest innocence and pay a few thousands for intense *Swadeshi* propaganda. When this was going on in 1928, the textile bourgeoisie was cutting down the weaving rates on *khadi* cloth and *dhoties* surreptitiously in order to lower costs and sell them at the best *khadi* rates with a genuine *Khaddar* Bhandar stamp. The mills mentioned above had cut down rates by  $33\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $13\frac{1}{3}$  and  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The bourgeoisie patriotically lied before the public who

were its victims and reaped super-profits. At the same time, in spite of the agreement of October, it cut down rates of the workers. Prospering on treachery to the peasantry, treachery to the workers and treachery to its own organisation, Indian Capitalism cannot but become counter-revolutionary and give the country in the hands of Imperialism. When the workers in Bombay fought against this gang, the Congress sided with the bourgeoisie. Though the workers never intended it, the fight for higher rates on all varieties including khadi cloth and dhoties, in fact was indirectly saving the khadi producers, the ideal patriots, from the severe competition and fraud of the mill-owners. Yet the Congress tried to sabotage the workers' struggle.

These 71 strikes were completely initiated and conducted by the workers themselves. During this phase of the struggle, the whole rank and file was drawn into the direct conduct of the strikes for which a new type of a live and flexible organisation was born. It was the mill committees and rank and file departmental leaders. The constitution of the G.K.U. (Ex. P. 939) which was copied from that of the B.T.L.U. contains a provision for establishing mill committees and the rules for their elections, management and functions. But neither the B.T.L.U. nor the G.K.U. or any other union had ever brought into being the real rank and file leadership in the form of the mill committees. But when the struggle assumed new forms, the mill committees began to spring up at the end of November 1928 and rapidly became very popular and powerful. The mill committees were not strictly created by regular elections nor did they function in accordance with the rules of the constitution. The reason was that the rule was originally framed without any experience of rank and file working. We gave the slogan of forming Mill Committees not from any pre-arranged plan as such. If that had been so it would have been done long before November. We had no experience of these things at all. When the November strikes in individual mills began, we found it impossible to cope with the whole work. So, when we attended the meetings of the workers and used to call out the men who knew the working of the mill, their grievances, the wages etc. in detail and could explain them. When such men came

forward we gave them the power to draft their case in full and put it before the management in the name of workers and under the authority of the Union. After one or two such examples, it was found that this worked very well, reduced the strain on the small number of officials of the Union and also trained the workers. So, a general slogan to form Mill Committees was issued and very eagerly taken up by all the workers. Within two months we had Mill Committee or a group of intelligent workers in almost every mill. The Mill Committees carried out the following work. They enrolled members and collected subscriptions. They watched the bureaucracy, and prevented it from harassing the workers by asking for bribes or molesting the women workers, or in any way worsening the conditions of work. They formulated grievances, collected information and directly approached the management and negotiated. When they failed to get a hearing, they either approached the head office for advice or embarked on a strike if it was immediately necessary. They prevented victimisation, dismissals, fines and abuses. The Mill Committees by January 1929 had developed into one of the important controlling factors in the management of the mills, so far as the workers' side was concerned. They called forth the best elements from the rank and file and began to prove superior to the corrupt mill bureaucracy even on questions of technical management.

**132. Mill-owners' move against Mill Committees and G.K.U. collections inside the mills—The Pearson Court of Inquiry for the 1929 General Strike—my evidence refused**

This development was strongly resented by the mill-owners and by December they had decided upon a strong hand policy. They issued two circulars, one prohibiting collection of Union subscriptions on the mill premises and another asking the mill managers not to allow the Union officials to enter the mill buildings beyond the office at the gate in order to see or hear on the spot the grievances of the workers. The second circular was issued in order to prevent the Union officials from acquainting themselves directly with the lay-out of machinery, the rest-house

and sanitary arrangements etc. Since long before the G.K.U. was born, it has been the practice for all Unions to collect subscriptions inside the mills on pay day. When there were no Mill Committees and no intensive participation of the workers in Union work, the usual method of collection was almost semi-official. Each Union had a number of sympathetic jobbers or foremen. The jobbers have powers to engage or dismiss a man. He often acts as a money-lender also (vide Whitley Commission Report). So a sympathetic jobber if captured by a Union, was able to bring many "members" and regular subscriptions, for he virtually was the master of the large group of his workers though the system of work was not a contract system. The Unions also were naturally dominated by jobbers. But they being themselves collectors of Union dues, no objection was ever raised by the management to the collection of Union dues inside the mills and moreover such collections also were not very large. The G.K.U. however overthrew the power of the jobbers and head jobbers and brought the rank and files into activity. Many of the jobbers thus lost the backing of the prestige of the Union, commissions on subscriptions and their illegal earnings. The mill-owners (in some cases prompted by the jobber) naturally raised the cry of discipline being lost and production suffering on account of subscription collection inside the mill, though this was done only once a month and during pay hours of the mill. We were not going to give up this right, and some of the mills had to strike for this. Till our arrest, we continued to realise dues on pay days inside the mills though the opposition from the mill-owners was growing.

The biggest grievance of the mill-owners was about the Mill Committees which according to them were becoming almost parallel organs of supervision and control. This was expressly voiced by them before the Pearson Court of Inquiry appointed after the General Textile Strike of 1929. The Court in its report observes: "There is ample evidence to show that in the middle of November the G.K.U. had collected sufficient strength and that the effect of its policy was being keenly felt by the mill-owners. One of the chief grievances of the mill-owners which is said to have caused most of the strikes that took place from the middle of

November was the working and methods of the Mill Committees formed by the G.K.U. for each mill and the doings of the members of such Mill Committees" (page 13). Further on it observes: "The interference by the members of the Mill Committees with the management was subversive of discipline, and the lightning strikes which were brought about by these members were not such as could be tolerated by the mill-owners". The Pearson Court sat from 6th July 1929 to 21st July, as constituted under section 4 of the Trade Disputes Act of 1929. It was asked not only to enquire into the General Textile Strike then going on, but also to report on disputes and agreements which had taken place before the Meerut arrests of 20th March 1929, and with which the new office bearers elected after our arrests were not expected to be fully conversant. All the papers affecting these methods were lying here in Meerut in the charge of the Additional District Magistrate who was enquiring into this case. When I applied for certain papers being sent to assist the Union in its case before the Court of Inquiry the Prosecution informed the Magistrate that they were required by them, though in the end they never put in those papers before this Court as their exhibits. As the Court of Inquiry was going to enquire into agreements arrived at in some cases between myself on behalf of the G.K.U. and the mill-owners and also those negotiated by the other office bearers, I wrote to the General Member of the Government of Bombay on 7th July 1929 saying "some terms of reference before the Court of Inquiry refer to that period and to mills, the agreements and understandings regarding which were mainly arrived at through me. And if I remember aright I have been accused of not observing them by the President of the Mill-owners' Association. Will you let me know how the Court can enquire into the dispute, when the office bearers of the Union who were present during and parties to agreement in the first stage of the dispute (that is before 1929 April) are not allowed to give their viewpoint and evidence on those matters and especially when such matters are made a part of the terms of reference. Does your Government think that an enquiry conducted without the viewpoint of such principal parties to certain agreements and disputes under enquiry can be considered

exhaustive, impartial and fair?" A copy of this letter was sent to the Court also. The General Department of the Bombay Government acknowledged receipt of the letter in its No. 7565-D-P T2 dated 20th July 1929. The question was also raised by the representatives of the Union before the Court. In para 5 of their report the Court observes: "In the course of the enquiry it was suggested to us that Mr. Dange and possibly some others who were standing their trial at Meerut should be called to give evidence before us on the ground that they being the officials of the G.K.U. prior to their arrest on the 20th March were the proper persons to depose relating to the affairs of that Union prior to that date. Ordinarily speaking that was a suggestion to which effect might reasonably have been given." The Court, however, refused to do what "reasonably" should have been done. The reason they gave was that we would have been cross-examined on matters which were being enquired into in this case and it might have harmed our interests. The Court also says that especially in view of this fact when the Mill-owners' Association wanted to lead evidence to show that the G.K.U. was being used by the Communists as a cover for their activities, it was disallowed by the Court as trespassing on the field of the Meerut case (para 6.)

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Such a solicitude for justice being meted out to us did not, however, prevent the Court from considering and using facts and papers that are evidence in this case—viz. "the Red Army Handbill" Exhibit P. 967, and the Kranti issue in Exh: P. 1744 and agreements and letters in D. 432. This Court of Inquiry sat and inquired under circumstances which expose the reactionary and sabotaging nature of the Trade Disputes Act under which it was formed and the uselessness of such courts in the workers' struggle. The Court refused to do what should have been done "reasonably" as they themselves admit, i.e. they refused to hear the Meerut prisoners on the subject matter of disputes on which they alone were competent to speak. Having disposed of matters under inquiry in the period prior to March 1929, what was done with the matters arising from the strike that was actually on? The

Government appointed the Court on 6th July and on 12th July arrested two of the leaders of the G.K.U. who at that time were in a position to conduct the case of the Union before the Court, which held five sittings without their presence as representatives of the Union. Ultimately, the Government sentenced them to six weeks' imprisonment on 19th July and the Court used to call them under guard from the prison to conduct the G.K.U. case. With the men connected with events prior to March 1929 in Meerut prison and with men connected with events after March 1929 in the Bombay prison the Court of inquiry sat and judged the G.K.U. with what they called impartiality and fairness!

### **133. Why we formed Mill Committees**

The Court quoted a statement of mine on the function of Mill Committees and lightning strikes made before the Fawcett Inquiry Committee. That statement was nothing but a description of the position of Mill Committees as conceived by the constitution of the G.K.U. The Court observed that the constitution of the Union was quite sane and did not confer on the Mill Committees or their members individually power to call a strike. According to the constitution the Committees were "purely advisory" bodies. The Court has accused us of not observing the sane rule. I do not deny that the Mill Committees did exercise powers more than what were conferred on them by the constitution of the Union, and that I did not attempt to bring these Committees strictly within the limits of the rules and their literal interpretation. But this does not mean that I endorsed every action of the Mill Committees. The constitution of the G.K.U. was obviously a copy from that of the B.T.L.U., in which the Mill Committees were given only advisory power. During the working of the Committees I found that that rule was not calculated to develop the initiative of the workers, and their capacities of study, organisation, management etc. For these they must have powers to take certain steps with regard to their demands and grievances in individual mills as apart from the demands common to the whole industry. I also found that they were not required to be able to do this. They took initiative and powers of their own accord and

it was against my principles to lessen their initiative by pointing out to the letter of the constitution. They were controlled only so far as to guide their actions in a disciplined channel, conformable with the general interests of all the workers, and to give them a proper perspective in matters which were immediately beyond their comprehension and in which therefore their individual actions were likely to conflict with the general line of the movement. It was, therefore, quite natural for the Court to find the Mill Committees not strictly in accordance with the constitution. The Court wanted us to make the Committees conform to an obviously faulty constitution. We wanted the constitution to advance according to the situation, when a particular struggle has far outgrown the limits of the constitution and not that the workers should go back within the limits of a faulty one. The bourgeois nature of that Court is seen in another remark it makes. It calls the power conferred in practice upon each officer of the Mill Committee to negotiate with the owners or declare a strike as "an act on the part of the G.K.U. which clearly disclosed a revolutionary tendency." (Page 19 of their report.) It is not a fact that each individual member of the Mill Committees had power to or did declare a strike though he had powers to approach the management on the question of grievances of his department. However, there is no harm in permitting the Mill Committees as a whole to declare strikes under certain circumstances. It is well-known that in India the employers make changes in wage rates and conditions of work and dismiss workers without any previous notice to the workers or their organisations. Naturally, when the workers are suddenly confronted with changes they also are entitled to suddenly refuse to work. Lightning strikes are direct effects of the highly anarchic conditions in the industry and the refusal of the bourgeoisie to recognise the workers' organisations or consult and inform them of proposed changes, a minimum right of trade unions recognised by the bourgeoisie in all advanced countries. Lightning strikes against such an order of things, against assaults on workers or confiscatory fines and dismissals become absolutely necessary and justified; and every Mill Committee must have powers to directly negotiate and take action



on such matters as immediately affect its workers. There is nothing revolutionary in this. And even if it is, it is bound to be acted upon by the workers in every organisation to protect their interests.

Reformist trade unions, afraid of displeasing the bourgeoisie, do not want the Mill Committees or Factory Councils to take initiative in direct action, where necessary, in India. They want to keep these Committees as "purely applicant bodies," standing in all humility before the trade union bureaucracy sitting at the Head Office. The reformists do not want the workers to learn all the ins and outs of the industry and be seriously capable and efficient to take over the control and management of the factories when the necessity will arise. On the contrary, we want the workers to learn the whole mechanism of production and distribution and become capable of exercising workers' control when the factories will be nationalised; and the Mill Committees are schools for such education. They are bodies through which you feel the pulse of the workers. They are advisory in the sense that they advise the Central leadership on the workers' mood, their grievances, the state of organisation and the steps that are to be taken on a scale larger than that of one individual mill or factory. In relation to the organised central leadership of the Union which is and ought to be formed from the essence of the best elements drawn from the Mill Committees, they are "advisory" before an action is determined upon and the "executive" organs when a certain action is to be carried out. In relation to the management they represent, direct and impose the will of the workers on the management in order to improve the working conditions or prevent their deterioration in the individual factory concerned.

It was this unprecedented rank and file participation in the work of the Union which made the mill-owners feel "the effects of its policy" (The report of the Pearson Court.) The mill-owners had thought of breaking down completely the resistance of the workers by attacking them immediately after the big six months' strike. But they had underestimated the capacity of the workers. When they were asked by the Court why they agreed to wage increases, as shown in the agreement made by them with the

G.K.U., they replied that it was done in order to purchase peace. If these gentlemen were so anxious for peace why did they resist an agreement which they ultimately made, for six months? Not for peace but because at that time stocks had accumulated and they could afford to close down for a few months which would have served two purposes—one of putting down the workers and another of getting the stocks off their hands. Now they wanted to trade and therefore wanted peace. They wanted peace from the workers in the name of the Agreement, but themselves continued to attack the wages of the workers. Certainly we were not those gentlemen of the Delhi Pact to give them such a kind of peace!

This Court of Inquiry was the first to be appointed under the Trade Disputes Act. The faithfulness it displayed towards its masters, the bourgeoisie and its verdict against the workers, have amply justified our criticism that the Trade Disputes Act is a Strike Breakers' Act and as such must be scrapped. If ever a disillusionment was required by the workers about it, it was provided by the results of this Inquiry Court. There are still many Yellow reformists and even some "radical" leaders who, whenever the workers want to resist the terrorism and retrenchment practised by the employers (whether State or private), always send appeals to the Government to intervene and appoint a Court of Inquiry under the Trade Disputes Act. They do this not so much to stay the workers' sufferings as from their fear of the working-class revolt. The Trade Disputes Act is a Strike Breakers' Act and therefore, those who ask Government to use it for preventing or settling a dispute naturally become strike breakers, deserving to be severely dealt with and brought to their senses by the organisations of the workers in which they work, in order to save them from degeneration.

#### **134. Participation in Fawcett Committee's work—Ex. P. 967—friction with the B.T.L.U. and B.M.W.U.**

Side by side with its organisational work the G.K.U. was conducting the workers' case before the Fawcett Committee appointed according to the October agreement. The mill-owners

several times raised the question of the small sectional strikes before the Committee, which sometimes inquired about the reasons of the strikes and gave its ruling whether they amounted to a breach of the agreement or not. Our attitude to such rulings was that when we found that the matter was not strictly within the terms of the agreement and the Committee being unacquainted with the industry was incapable of really grasping the issues of the disputes, we pressed our claims with the mill-owners in spite of the Committee's views. This was quite necessary and within the terms of the agreement. It has been suggested that as soon as we agreed to call off the strike on certain conditions, we began preparations for another strike and broke the spirit and also the terms of the agreement by such preparations and therefore the 71 lightning strikes took place (vide Mr. James' Address.) Now there is no doubt about the fact that in the Kranti of October 13, 1928. I wrote the article that the strike was *not ended but suspended*. The handbill of 12th October also said "in order to pursue the new fight for the demands of all mills to a successful close a preparation for *six months* is necessary (Ex. P. 967.) The Pearson Court quotes the words "six months" in italics thereby hinting that the big strike of April 1929 coming as it did exactly six months after this handbill of October 1928, was carried out according to a definitely pre-arranged plan of giving "no peace till Capitalism is overthrown" (Their Report page 10.) But all these suggestions and innuendoes are baseless and fail to understand the October agreement as also our subsequent conduct in outlining the programme in the handbill. There was nothing in the October agreement to prevent us from making new demands, which were not subject matter of the inquiry before the Fawcett Committee. For example, a strike that occurred in the Dawn Mills had as one of its reasons the non-fulfilment by the management of a promise they had given to the workers that they would put up a decent dining place for the workers. Such a strike was not banned by the October agreement. Then again the agreement was quite temporary. The mill-owners had agreed to maintain the wages of March 1927 and not to extend rationalisation, *only until* the

Committee reported on the matters before them. As soon as the Report was out the mill-owners were free to do what they liked. We thought that the Committee would not take more than six months to finish its work. If the Committee were to uphold the mill-owners' side, as they actually did on important matters, what were we to do? The workers were not going to allow a wage-cut or extension of rationalisation. Also we had agreed to the rational system in a few mills only during the truce period and were free to fight out that system after that. All this could not be done without organisation. The mill-owners were not in need of any programme like that issued by us. They had the police and military as their "volunteers," they had the banks for their "strike fund" and they had the whole bourgeois press for their "lecturers." They had everything ready to smash us, while we had yet to get together the modest forces outlined in our handbill, before the period of agreement expired. The mill-owners had already said before the Committee that they would introduce the standard and rational systems some time in October 1929 (Fawcett Committee Report, page 127). So if there was a plan of another general strike it was conditional upon the nature of the report of the Fawcett Committee and the attitude of the mill-owners. If the prospect of an attack was so clearly outlined before us by the mill-owners themselves were we not entitled to issue the programme as in P. 967?

The mill-owners understood this very well and they took steps against the G.K.U. They issued orders to stop collection of Union dues inside the mills and to victimise the Mill Committee members. There was also another party which would have liked the G.K.U. to go down. This was the three rival Unions in the industry—(1) the G.K.M., the rump of the old Mahamandal; (2) the B.T.L.U. of Mr. N. M. Joshi; and (3) the Bombay Mill-workers' Union of Jhabwala. The tremendous growth of the G.K.U. had pushed all these three Unions into the background. Only the B.T.L.U. tried to hold some ground in the first two months but it failed. Jhabwala's Union was formed of a few hundred mechanics mainly, whose hours of work were being

increased and who showed some amount of "craft-separatism". The B.T.L.U. was completely ousted from all areas except Madanpura and Kurla. It clashed with us directly on two occasions and failed. One was on behalf of two jobbers who were dismissed by the management on pressure from the workers. The B.T.L.U. asked the management for their reinstatement but it could not be done as the workers had refused to work under them. The management finding the two Unions making contradictory demands took the dispute before the Fawcett Committee (November 27, 1928). The Committee refused to go into the matter as it had no jurisdiction. The jobbers also approached some of our principal leaders who were their old acquaintances. But that also did not help them as the rank and file were determined not to work under them in any case. The Mill-workers' Union remained a negligible force. After the agreement of October 1928, when it was found that the Sassoon workers resisted the agreement, the leader of this Union attempted to make out before his membership that he did not advise or agree to such an agreement. This was an attempt not to face issues honestly but to throw the blame on other parties. The agreement contained only one signature that of Mr. N. M. Joshi on behalf of the Joint Strike Committee and every one could play the dirty game of saying that he for one had nothing to do with it. It was in answer to such an attempt that a specific mention of the names of all those who were present at the October conference and had agreed to the truce terms was made in the handbill issued to the Sassoon workers (Ex. P. 966). Another attempt by the same Union to secure a footing was made in December. It was after the attack of certain hirelings on the G.K.U. leaders and the consequent clash with the police on 12th December 1928. The Mill-workers' Union on the same day sent out a letter to several mills telling them that they stood for industrial peace unlike other Unions. (It was a suggestion that they did not approve of such happenings as took place on 12th December, 1928.) It was an attempt to build up a Union by agreement of industrial peace with the mill-owners. But all such attempts failed.

**135. The attack of 11th and firing of 12th December 1928—  
the cause of handbill P. 929—the second attack which  
went wrong**

The G.K.M.'s attempts were not those of a Union as such, but of a blacklegging agency of gangsters. The B.T.L.U. and the B.M.W.U. had at least stood with the General Strike of 1928 and though reformists they had not yet become regular gangster agencies. (It is said the B.T.L.U. degenerated into one in the strike of April 1929.) The G.K.M. was nothing but a group of a few men of the under-world led by a gangster, whom we called "dada" in Bombay. This gang now wanted to break the G.K.U. and followed the well-known method of gunmen. A false message was received on 11th December noon in our head office by a phone that there was trouble at the Sassoon Spinning and Weaving Mills. This mill is situated in the locality inhabited by this gangster. On receiving the message according to our usual practice, two of our leaders with two others went in a car to the mill. It was found there from the management that there was some very unimportant complaint about a jobber, which we now think was only stage-managed. When our representatives came out and boarded their car, it was attacked by ten or fifteen men. The main attack fell on Mr. Kasse and another who were severely injured on the head. Nimbkar also got slight scratches. The assailants decamped. They were led by one K. Broker, who is a notorious gangster in the locality and stood behind the G.K.M. A complaint was lodged at the Police Station. The police made it a summons case and of course failed to trace the assailants. The workers when they heard the news flocked to the Union Office to find out if all were safe and in the morning they closed down about fifty mills in protest of the attack. About 10,000 of them, it appears went to the gangster's place in rage and razed it down. The gang had already fled. When the demonstration was going through Lalbag, the police tried to snatch the Red Flag carried by one of them. This led to a clash. The police opened fire and killed four workers and injured 18. The police report says that thirty of their forces were injured, but curiously enough fails to mention altogether the cause of the clash.

Of the four dead, three were textile workers and one was a motor mechanic. The presence of a motor mechanic amongst the dead shows the way of firing by the police force. The procession which came into clash with the police was entirely of mill-workers. There was no chance of any motor mechanic taking part in it, neither was it accompanied by any motor cars. The death of the mechanic can be explained solely by the fact that the police indulged in indiscriminate firing, a larger and more grim feature of which was later on experienced by the people of Sholapur in May 1930. Fire where you like was the rule that guided the police and naturally every passerby and inhabitant of the locality was in danger and one such passerby happened to be the mechanic.

These attacks and armed terrorism against defenceless workers were bound to excite feelings. In the morning of 12th, after dispersing the workers that had gathered in front of my house just near the head office of the Union, I rushed to the press and issued a handbill informing the workers of the safety of the persons who were attacked and requesting them not to close down the mills. But before the handbill could be fully distributed, the firing had taken place. Immediately we had to take steps about the funeral of the four workers. From the mortuary we took the three bodies of the textile workers, (the body of the mechanic having been taken away by his relations and friends) and carried them to the crematorium some miles away. There we got them photographed by a photographer who had his shop near the Union office and who is Prosecution witness no. 189. Armed police lorries accompanied us all along and prevented any procession or demonstration. They forced on us a hurried cremation, so that a large number of workers may not assemble at the ceremony. The photographs were taken for two reasons. It is now a general practice to take photographs of firing, demonstrations etc. for their news value and as a remembrance. But there was also one more specific reason for us.

There was a negligible element of communalist opposition in the Union, helped and guided by the Non-Brahmin Party, which under the influence of Government working through one of its

Ministers, who was himself a party member, was trying to create a schism in the Union on caste issues. The Bombay organisation of this Party had followed the mean tactic of inciting the communal and superstitious prejudices of the Hindu workers by telling them that we had taken no care to arrange for the observance of proper Hindu rites, in the cremation of Parasram Jhadhov who had fallen in the firing on 23rd April 1928. Their paper, the Kaiwari, had especially selected Nimbkar and myself for the attack, as we happened to be born by natural accident of Brahmin parents. In order to guard against such allegations we took the precaution to have the photograph and publish it in the Kranti of 13th January 1929—Exh: P. 1744. The photograph is here D 417.

After finishing with the funeral I went to the press again and issued another handbill—Exh: P. 929. The Prosecution have exhibited this second handbill, but have not produced the first one of the morning of the same day. Both these handbills were primarily meant to send the workers back to the mills so that the commotion be reduced and therewith the chances of furnishing some excuse to the mill-owners and Government to make a more determined attack on the workers and the G.K.U. But such appeals to the workers were not to be made in a demoralising or frightening tone. No doubt they had to be told that they were powerless at that moment before the organised armed forces. At the same time we could not say that they were absolutely powerless. They were told to avoid a direct clash with the police forces, not with humanitarian considerations but because in the present state of the workers' organisations the losses would have been far greater than the gains. For example, the workers were right when they refused to give up the flag and resisted. They were right when they closed down the mills and rallied behind the G.K.U. That one single move consolidated the rank and file more than anything else could have done. But it would have been a mistake to continue the strike. All these considerations determined the tone and slogan of the handbill. It was a call for militant organisation as well as an exhortation to resume work. Only on such a basis could peace be restored, side by side with the full use of the tremendous response of the workers for



further organisational work of the Union. Hence the handbill P. 929 is, as it should have been, in conformity with Trade Union Principles.

The police who were cold and negligent about our complaint against the assaults of 11th December, were however very prompt and enthusiastic about the happenings of the 12th. They wanted to catch some men amongst us on the allegation of having incited the workers to go and destroy the gangsters' den. One by one all the prominent workers of the G.K.U. were summoned to the Police Station and a searching cross-examination was carried out, but it failed to lead to anything.

This attack was an outcome of an organised conspiracy of the blacklegging gang of the G.K.M. whose leading spirit was Borkar, helped by the mill-owners and the police. The swift advantage which the mill-owners tried to take of this incident lends support to this statement. On the very day the clash took place, the mill-owners held a special meeting at 3 O'clock in the noon, and discussed whether they should declare a lock-out as the workers had closed down the mills without reason of any genuine trade dispute. Some of the more shrewd amongst them saw the danger of a general mass discontent if such steps were taken in the tense atmosphere of the day and the proposal was dropped. They then decided to ask the Government to arrest the leaders of the G.K.U. and declare it an unlawful association. Accordingly a deputation waited on the Governor of Bombay in December 1928. The Governor's reply though not encouraging at the moment assured the mill-owners that it was behind them and would take steps to smash militant Labour. But immediately Government did not accede to the mill-owners' request as it had not yet tried all its indirect methods of gangster attacks, prompting inter-union rivalry, financing anti-G.K.U. groups, and in the end provoking communal pogroms. In the next three months all these were tried and on their failure, they resorted to the action of 20th March, 1929.

*Emboldened by the connivance of the police towards their murderous attack, another set of hirelings attempted to waylay me in a more daring manner than they had done on 11th December.*

They knew that the ruse of a telephone message and luring us in their quarters would not work this time. So this time they planned the action to take place just near our Head Office. In December, another gangster came to the Head Office at about 8 in the morning which was my usual time to come there and start going to the various mills for settlement of complaints etc. I found about 50 men standing in groups at various corners of the street. When I was going near the tram stand just near the office of the Union, a swaggering fellow smelling liquor asked me where Mr. Dange was. This question confirmed my suspicion. In December it was impossible to find any worker in the majority of mills, who did not know most of us. Moreover, I knew the face and name of this gang leader, as I had information collected about almost all important gangsters in the mill area since the last attack. So I pointed him towards the office where I told him he would find the man he wanted. He and four or five of his companions who also being non-workers but disguised as workers did not recognise me, went to the office and created a scene there but failed to get what they wanted. On my return I met a newspaper reporter who used to see us daily for news about strikes and other matters. I told him of the morning "joke." True to his bourgeois salt he perverted what I had told him and flashed the story on the wires. Having had experience of the happening of 12th December I took the precaution to write to the various centres of the Union a letter in my own hand, telling them to inform the workers that any news appearing in the press about any attack on me should not be believed and that I was quite safe. In spite of this the Mill Committees sent messengers to inquire about the truth of the news and the timely steps taken by them prevented a probable closing down of mills and a further clash. These two successive attempts in the same month, the use made of them by the mill-owners and the indirect help of the police convinced us that serious efforts were being made to terrorise in the first instance the leaders of the G.K.U. or in the alternative to provoke clashes and pogroms. It became, therefore, more necessary to strengthen the organisation and also be on guard against the incitement of communal warfare, faint signs of which were showing themselves.

**136. The consolidation of the G.K.U.—the programme of funds and volunteers as worked out—the G.K.U. finances—Exhibits P. 949, 959, 971 and 982**

The offensive of our opponents had an electric effect on our organisational programme. The workers became convinced of the necessity of carrying out the programme regarding the membership, funds and volunteers, which was drawn up on the assumption that within six months the Fawcett Committee would finish its work and help the employers with their verdict. During the last strike the Joint Strike Committee had found itself short of funds in spite of the receipt of over Rs. 1,11,000. Moreover we did not expect the co-operation of the reformists in the next strike, if it were forced upon us. Neither did we expect Government to allow the help from the international proletariat to reach us. This was clearly demonstrated in the strike of April 1929 which took place after the publication of the Fawcett Report. However it would be wrong to suppose that we had definitely fixed upon a general textile strike in the immediate future. Even if there had been no Inquiry Committee or no prospect of an immediate conflict, the programme was necessary for the purposes of building up Trade Unionism. We succeeded only in fulfilling half of the programme in the three full working months of November, December and January. The month of February was darkened by the Hindu-Muslim riots, the effects of which were felt even till the end of March. If we had been left in peace, we would have got every man and woman in the mills inside the Union. But Imperialism did not want to tolerate even simple Trade Unionism in India, and therefore carried out the Union smashing raids of 20th March 1929.

The Prosecution have put into exhibits certain papers and books of the G.K.U. concerning the financial side of our Union work, concerning some receipts and disbursement of moneys. Their purpose is not clear in putting in these papers and exhibits. If it is meant to show that I was handling large sums of money as a General Secretary of the Union, the exhibition of these half-complete careless jottings was superfluous. A reference to the

resolutions of the Union, the bank account and the five names of the office bearers, any three of which could jointly operate the accounts, would have given a more faithful picture. What has been done is to put in a so-called daily cash-book, which is not written by any of the office-bearers of the Union (Exh: P. 959) and covers in a very incomplete manner certain days in February, and then even mentions the receipts and disbursement done through the writer alone and not of the whole Union. It is in fact a note of transactions done by the head clerk of the Union and does not in any way reflect the financial condition of the G.K.U. since it scrappily mentions some items for only 32 dates out of a period of 5½ months. It is not a cash-book of the Union at all. The other two exhibits are P. 949, a bunch of papers and P. 971, a pencil-written notebook, both mentioning certain figures of Union moneys. In the Lower Court the Prosecution had also put in P. 982, a piece of paper with certain figures, probably of rupees mentioned against the names of Bradley, Usmani etc. but it was not put to any handwriting witness to show whose paper it was. The Prosecution however withdrew this exhibit in this Court. As for P. 949 one paper marked No. 6 was shown to P.W. 133, Colonel Rahman but was not shown to the Handwriting Expert of the Prosecution, P.W. 277. Out of this bunch of papers P. 949, though at the beginning the Prosecution wanted to use only No. 6 they later on seemed to have decided to use the whole lot, as it appears from the selected figures they have printed in detail from pages 21 to 31 of this exhibit. As for P. 971, the poor thing has also suffered from negligence which it does not deserve. For if the other two contained figures by a hundred, this exhibit mentions imposing sums running into thousands. But the modest Mr. James did not like to pursue these thousands with the same zeal as he pursued his or those of the Strike Relief Fund coming from outside India. Though the Prosecution have used the commandeered services of four handwriting witnesses, they never allowed them to set their profane eyes on this exhibit. When an excellent Lieutenant-colonel I.M.S. and a handwriting expert attached to the highest secret service of the Government were not asked to determine the parentage of this exhibit why should a layman like myself interfere in the job?

There are very powerful reasons for this behaviour on the part of the Prosecution. Having once put the documents in exhibit they withdrew one out of 4 of this kind. And with the remaining three they never dealt properly. They were not referred to in the summing up of the case in the Lower Court either by the Prosecution or the Magistrate. Then why are they there at all? The reason is that the Prosecution have been assailed by their own contradictions. Their two fundamental theories fight against each other. One is the theory of Moscow gold, the interpretation of every act of ours being backed by Moscow gold. And the second is the theory of the use of Trade Unions to further the aims of the conspiracy. On the first theory, they say these accused had no funds to carry on their activities; they appealed to Moscow and worked with Moscow gold. Having said that they laid their hands on the G.K.U. and, probably to their surprise, find that there are thousands of rupees lying in its bank account paid by the textile workers and the thousands of subscription receipts, and vouchers stand there in all defiance as a challenge to the ridiculous theory of Moscow financing everything. But then the Prosecution cannot go back on their second theory, and, true to their Imperialism which is full of contradictions, they stuck to their contradiction, seized a few papers mentioning some small sums against the names of some of the accused as having been paid by the G.K.U. in its routine work they have come forth to say: "Here is a Trade Union and there is a band of conspirators and in between we put, your Honour, some papers with sums of 10,20,100. Obviously the most clear conclusion is that the Trade Unions financed the conspiracy or if you like the conspiracy financed the Trade Unions." They have refused to see that if they mention this, then the necessity of Moscow gold is ruled out; and if they retain fully the Moscow gold then the Union gold is ruled out. The two are mutually exclusive for the reason that a "clever conspirator" (so clever that the Prosecution say that it took its clever police three years to unearth us while a Bombay daily was actually using our "most secret" morning letter in its evening edition) who knows that the police are after him would not do the costly experiment of asking for Moscow gold, when he has a Union worth thousands to back him. In order to get out of this muddle, they practised two things. They kept back all papers that would show that the Union was

financially very powerful and secondly they put forth some half-complete documents and scratchy notes to show that moneys were being mysteriously handed out, in many a case appearing as large "suspense" items; and what is a suspense item, if not a suspicious conspiratorial item holding the fate of the Empire in painful suspense?

If the Prosecution had taken care to be less slipshod they would have found that while the so-called Cash Book, P. 959 would mention one item as suspense, it fails to mention anything between 7th and 15th February, 1929. At the same time P. 949 on paper Nos. 27 and 28 summarises a number of vouchers for these dates and over and above leaves a large space after each date in order to mention some more that might come in. D 562 (the letter of the Joint Treasurer of the G.K.U., Mr. B. T. Alwe, dated 16th February, 1929) mentions having received Rs. 5,680-12-0 while the so-called Cash Book has no such reference at all. Then there is one more thing about P. 949. Paper No. 19 on which according to the Prosecution some figures are written in my hand, shows a total of Rs. 10,029-7-6 as money said to have been paid in the head office in February, 1929 while paper No. 20 gives the total of expenditure of Rs. 12,675-9-3. Part of paper No. 19 is in one hand, part in another, while nothing is said as to who wrote No. 20, neither is it alleged that it is mine. If any one tries to build any conclusions from such figures he either does not understand anything of accounts or he is deliberately drawing dishonest conclusions, because none of these papers is in any sense complete or written by persons responsible for the income and expenditure of the Union especially in February 1929. Then again conclusions drawn from these papers will be cut out by Exh. P. 971. For example paper No. 19 in P. 949 mentions a total of Rs. 1700/- from Tardeo for three dates, 14th and 18th February and 5th March but does not mention Rs. 400/- found on 4th February in P. 971 and P. 959. It also mentions a few sums from Naigaon centre but does not mention an item of Rs. 3728/- found in P. 971 against the same centre. Again paper No. 20 of P. 949 shows Rs. 1780/- and Rs. 1510/- (total Rs. 3290/-) as being sent to the bank credit and also tallies with P. 971. But the actual Imperial Bank Pass Book of the Union D 459 shows under deposit Rs. 4500/- on 15th February besides these two items on 18th and

26th. As regards P. 971 by itself, its income side totals Rs. 11623-5-0 while its expenditure column totals Rs. 18402-10-3. It is easy to see how this happened. Two items of Rs. 3510/- and Rs. 1000/- appear as safe deposits on 12th February. It appears that due to the communal riots in the city the Imperial Bank at Byculla where the G.K.U. had its account and which lay in the riotous zone could not be approached in those days. Hence these sums were kept with somebody as safe deposits for two or three days and when the bank could be approached, were partly sent to the bank and partly expended on current expenses. Thus they appear twice. So also two sums of Rs. 1000/- and 2000/- are given on 25th and 26th February for bail deposits, the practice being that as soon as arrests of workers were reported, somebody used to be sent to the police stations, with sufficient money to bail out the men and then separate receipts for different cases were made out. Rs. 2600/- in D 556 of 27th February (and later on realised by the G.K.U. after our arrests) is a consolidated receipt with reference to the above two items, and seems to have been noted in P. 971 on 1.3.29, the balance being carried into other items of bail. The same thing happened with this entry as with those of safe deposits and hence the double mention in the rough jottings. When these items, which ordinarily should have been repeated on the income side but do not appear to have been done probably in order to keep the net income figures clear of cross-entries are deducted, we get the total expenditure reduced by Rs. 7710/- which would then come to Rs. 11292-10-3 against our income of Rs. 11623-5-0. This makes P. 971 by itself quite intelligible and the transactions of the person who kept it quite clear; but it also is not a completely representative account of the Union as a whole. This will show that P. 949, P. 959 and P.971 are incomplete notes and can give no idea and yield no complete conclusions about the transactions of the G.K.U. If the Prosecution and those who agree with them wanted to draw any fair conclusions, they should have exhibited and studied the over 2,000 vouchers found in search of the Union—item No. 73 of the search list P. 947. They should have exhibited, arranged, and summarised in an intelligent form all the Union papers they seized in the search. Even then also quite a complete picture would not have been possible. Because as the search officer himself admits (M.B.Sait, P.W. 188) "he took only

what he thought important" and "left the rest behind." Now this "rest left behind" consisted of a number of files, receipts, vouchers, registers etc. Without them a complete picture cannot be presented of the Union membership, of the income and expenditure and of its financial position in detail. None can say now what has happened to this "rest left behind" because the police seized the material by breaking the locks and forcing the doors open, when none of the officers of the Union were present, and after pillaging the whole thing left it in nobody's charge. However any false conclusions that may be drawn from the Prosecution exhibits can be set aright by a reference to the Defence exhibits filed on these matters, as also a thorough digest of the papers found in item No. 73 of the search list P. 947, which has not been exhibited so far. Such a digest will show, (correct within two or three hundreds due to the incompleteness of the papers especially for the month of March, 1929) that every pie collected has been spent for the work of the Union alone and will smash thoroughly any statement alleging the appropriation of the Union funds for anything but the interest of the workers. Every rupee paid by the workers is traceable and accounted for in the documents of the Union, though the mill-owners left me no time to pay attention to the office work, its regular organisation, as every hour of every day from October to March, I was continually on the run due to the 71 strikes, the innumerable individual complaints from various mills, the sittings of the Fawcett Inquiry Committee and such other things. Naturally, this was bound to dislocate a certain amount of office work but not to such an extent as to leave room for reckless statements. A conference of the bourgeois bodies convened in June 1929 by the Governor of Bombay made allegations of the unlawful use and sources of the funds of the G.K.U. and subsequently the Pearson Court was asked to submit a report on this allegation after examining the papers of the Union. The report was kept confidential but the fact that Government could find nothing to take steps against the Union, as is confessed by it in its note of February 1930, shows how strong and quite regular our position has been throughout. From the materials available and put forth in the exhibits and the searches, the following abstract of the financial positions of the G.K.U. can be made out.



COLLECTIONS OF THE G.K.U. FROM MAY 1928 TO MARCH 1929

Centre	October	November	December	January	February	March	Total	
							(By Centres)	(By Months)
Wadi	720 12 0	2441 0 0	2040 0 0	5893 4 0	4305 8 0	2057 8 0	17464 0 0	Oct. 6794 0 0
Naigaon	353 11 0	1139 6 0	2341 15 6	3149 4 0	6457 6 0	2653 12 0	16095 6 6	Nov. 12283 0 0
Lalbag.	503 8 0	1595 12 0	3916 5 0	7414 0 0	853 6 0	2769 8 0	17052 7 0	Dec. 15135 4 6
Ferg. Rd.	533 4 0	4427 0 0	1735 11 0	6506 12 0	2155 0 0	1341 15 6	16699 11 0	Jan. 31100 12 0
DI. Rd.	400 4 0	2232 14 0	1434 9 0	2518 8 0	34 0 0	406 5 0	7026 8 0	Feb. 16555 4 6
Tardeo	.....	.....	1625 0 0	3300 0 0	1800 0 0	2340 11 0	9065 11 0	Mar. 12505 15 6
Shivdi	173 0 0	284 4 0	989 4 0	1458 0 0	950 0 0	781 4 0	4635 12 0	
Hd. Office	4109 9 0	162 12 0	1046 8 0	861 0 0		155 0 0	6334 13 0	
							<hr/>	
	6794 0 0	12283 0 0	15135 4 6	31100 12 0	16555 4 6	12505 15 6	94374 4 6	94374 4 6
							<hr/>	
And Collections May to Oct							88 12 0	88 12 0
							<hr/>	
							94463 0 6	94463 0 6
							<hr/>	
Total collection of the Union from May 1928 to 19th March 1929 were							94463 0 6	94463 0 6

For the purposes of this abstract exhibits P. 949, P. 959, P. 971, and Defence exhibits D 441, D 442, D 443, D 444, D 446, D 447, D 448, D 449, D 450, (head office register of receipts for moneys credited there by the centres), D 428 (1), (2) and (3) D 459, D 460, D 461, D 462, D 559 and D 562 can be consulted. Collection figures are found in a more or less consolidated manner till January 1929, but those of February are scattered owing to the complete dislocation of office work and regular routine caused by the riots in February. This one factor may leave some room to make some wild statements. But they can be shown to be all baseless. From all the papers referring to this month's collections, noted above, the totals, even after accepting the highest figures, where more than one reference to the same item would require such a decision, cannot be pushed up by any means beyond Rs. 16555-4-6. Anybody who would maintain a higher figure can be proved to be in the wrong. Similarly in the case of March, though P. 959 would give a total of Rs. 12098-2-6, I would be prepared to consider Rs. 12505-15-6 more valid according to D 441 to D 450. Then the results are that limiting ourselves strictly to D 441 to D 450 for the purposes of October to January we get a total collection of Rs. 65313-0-6, and adding up February and March, a total of Rs. 94463-0-6. But if we accept the highest figures in those cases again wherein two or more cross references may vary, the above January end total as per D 452 (1) and (2) will come to Rs. 67154-1-3 which together with February (Rs. 16555-4-6) and March (Rs. 12505-15-6) comes to Rs. 96215-5-3. Ultimately basing myself on the present material and accepting the highest figures in cases where variations within a few hundreds—quite natural in view of the incompleteness of the available exhibit material—as correct, I can say that the workers paid Rs. 96,000/- in round figures to the G.K.U.

Coming to expenditure a reference to D 452 (2) would show it to be Rs. 14124-3-6 up to January end. There is no such consolidated sheet for the months of February and March 1929. A reference to the papers in item 73 of P. 947 for February gives a total expense of Rs. 5790-4-3. Add to this references in Exh: P. 959 and P. 971 (of Rs. 100+95+100=295) which are not found in item 73 papers, one pronote or rather receipt of Rs. 110/- lodged with the Union in April 1929 and an item of Rs. 70/- incurred in D 562. Then deduct Rs. 400/- in P. 959 which would appear once

as a suspense item but is returned in expenditure which can be seen from reference to papers in item 73 of P 947. This brings the expenses by vouchers to Rs. 5891-10-9 Then there are deposits of bail money for workers who were arrested in February and March in the New China Mill case and other cases, as also payments (Rs. 2350/-) made by cheques directly through the bank On the basis of all available material, the abstract for February would work out thus in my terms:

February 1929			
Income		Expenditure	
By collections	Rs 16555-4-6	To Expenses	Rs 8241-10-9
By cheque on Bank	Rs 2350-0-0	To Bail Deposits	Rs 3000-0-0
Other receipts	Rs 559-13-9	To Bank	Rs 7790-0-0
	<u>Rs 19465-2-3</u>		
34 12-9		Balance with Gen	
100 0 0		Secretary	Rs 400 11-6
250 0 0		Balance with	
150-0 0		Office	Rs 32 12-0
25-0-0			<u>Rs 19465-2-3</u>
559 13 9 (P 959)			

(The three items of Rs 1180-12-0 returned by Joint Treasurer in D 562 are ruled out by cross entries as between office and the treasurer ) As regards the month of March obviously nothing very definite can be said as item 73 which contained materials throwing light on February does not contain any papers of March But that such papers there were can be seen from pages 22-25 of Exh P 949 wherein the total of voucher expenses in March "through Dange" comes to Rs 1190-10-0 P 959 would show sums of Rs 1809-4-0 being handed over to me This together with February balance of Rs. 400-11-6 would make Rs 2209-15-6 against me. Of this Exh P 949 shows expenses through me of Rs 1190-10-0 but this is only up to 11th March There are no papers regarding the rest of the 8 days till 20th March

D/- 22 12 31

The balance was spent in deposits of bail money at the police stations which was Rs. 900 or just thereabouts. This can be

partially corroborated by reference to D 563. This would leave Rs. 119-5-6 only specifically against me in March. In D 459 (Imperial Bank Pass Book) we find two cheques of Rs 500 each cashed on 7th and 16th March, but it is not known by whom and for what as they were issued bearer cheques for "self". Neither does Exh: P. 959 mention them on those dates. It means that Rs. 1119-5-6 remain to be shown in expenses or balances. Adding up the disbursements for which record is available, there would remain to be explained a shortage of Rs. 680-7-0 to make the total disbursements square with the total receipts. This deficiency also could be corrected if the papers left behind by the Search Officer were available here. Thus a sum of Rs. 1800-12-6 only awaits a reference to further relevant records which are not brought here, and certainly I cannot be held responsible for it. Still I am quite sure that it can be easily found either in balances or expenses for the unrecorded period of 8 days, during which numerous house searches and launching of cases were being carried out against the workers demanding our constant readiness with large cash in office to release them on bail and give them other help. The abstract for the month of March on this material would work out thus:

March 1929			
Income		Expenditure	
By collections	12,505-15-6	To Voucher P 949	1,190-10-0
Balance from Gen		„ „ P 959	573-12-3
Secretary from Feb	400-11-6	„ „ Cheque	650-0-0
By cheque	1,000-0-0	Expense, record of	
By Balance from		which is not here	1,800-12-6
Feb. (P 959)	36-4-9	To Bail	2,400-0-0
		(P 959, D 563 etc.)	
By cheque on Bank	650-0-0	To Bank Deposits	7960-0-0
			17-13-0
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	14,592-15-9		14,592-15-9

(Here cross entries of Rs 1,746 as between the office and Treasurer are cut out as per references in Exhibits P. 959 and D 451).

So we can now strike a consolidated balance-sheet, which would present a broad but correct outline of the state of the Unions' finances on the eve of our arrests:

Income		Expenditure	
Income Jan. end	67,154-1-3	Expense to Jan. end	14,124-3-6
„ February	16,555-4-6	„ „ Feb. end	11,241-10-9
„ March	12,505-15-6	„ „ March end	6,615-2-9
		Balance in Office	17-13-0
		„ at Imperial Bank	64,495-0-0
	<hr/> 96,215-5-3		<hr/> 96,493-14-0

In a turnover of nearly a lakh of rupees the discrepancy of less than Rs. 300 is nothing in view of the incompleteness of the material available in the records put before the Court and also in search material. Also small mistakes are likely to have occurred in the above by small suspense sums appearing over again as expenses through bills and such others and hence the excess appears on the side of expenses temporarily. They can, I am sure, correct the above discrepancy. I can state with complete confidence before the workers without any fear of being disproved on any material item that till the day of my arrest the workers had paid into the Girmi Kamgar Union in round figures Rs. 96,000 out of which Rs. 25,000 were spent on the work of the Union and Rs. 71,000 were left in the form of cash-balances with the Imperial Bank, bail deposits at the various police stations, and some small sums with the Joint Treasurer, Mr. B. T. Alwe. I am quite prepared to prove, explain and argue on the figures I have stated and the conclusions drawn, from the documents available here and even to strengthen and illuminate them, correct to the last pie, if opportunity were given to me to procure the documents left behind after search by the police officer, and if they are still available. This should be sufficient to explode the wild talk about the G.K.U. money and its "use".

The Girmi Kamgar Union really began to function from October, after the calling off of the strike. Since then the membership began to soar up continuously till January, in which month the collection of subscription and Strike Fund was the

highest. But it cannot be said from the drop seen in the collections of February and March 1929 that we would not have been able to keep up the high membership which was well over 100,000 in January. The fall in membership in the next two months is not due to the turning away of the workers from the Union as such. February was a month of communal rioting in Bombay, and the pay day of the workers, on which all the collections are made, fell in the middle of the riotous period, and thousands of workers who had not already left Bombay did so on receiving their pay straightway. In February for the same reason the mills did not work to full capacity and therefore our collections in March also were low. Had it not been for the February calamity we would have got every man and woman of the remaining 40,000 in the G.K.U. within the next three months. Every rupee of the ordinary subscription represents four members. We had also a Strike Fund of one rupee per head, payment of which was not compulsory for every member. The special collection of the Strike Fund was less than Rs. 10,000 for all the six months together. Deducting this from the total of Rs. 96,000 we get an *average membership* nearing 58,000 from October to March. The lowest being 28,000 in October 1928 and the highest over 100,000 in January 1929. (The Registrar of Trade Unions in Bombay disbelieved my report when I informed him in December that our membership was near 80,000 and he persisted in announcing it as 54,000 only. Now at least from the above figures he should correct himself.) When we were removed from the field, the Bombay Government in its note of 25th February 1930, while reviewing the past, observed: "The Girni Kamgar Union was the first Union to undertake an intensive propaganda and to organise a large body of workers into a Trade Union, with a regular organisation, collection of subscriptions and accumulation of funds. The other Trade Unions had only a limited membership although their organisation was on sound enough lines and they were controlled by well-known social workers." It was exactly for this reason that the G.K.U. aroused the ire of the Bombay bourgeoisie and the Government which wrote the above note. They did not want "a large body of workers into a Trade Union with a regular organisation." They wanted only such

unions as had "a limited membership controlled by well-known social workers"—well-known for their being amenable to bourgeois reasonableness, their intense efforts to avoid strikes and guard the interests of both the bourgeoisie and the workers, which ultimately means predominantly to guard the interests of the bourgeoisie. If the organisers of the G.K.U. would not make way for these well-known social workers then Imperialism, assisted by the Indian bourgeoisie, would step in and try to clear the way by locking their opponents in the prisons. Unfortunately, it has not helped the well-known sound enough social workers in any way.

**137. The Pearl Mill murder case—(references—Exhibits P. 958, resolutions of the G.K.U. Managing Committee)**

Soon after the attack and firing of December 12th the G.K.U. was faced with the Pearl Mill murder case. This Mill had given much trouble to the workers in several ways. It was running counts 40 yarn on high draft system which very few mills in Bombay did. It had a large number of Jacquard looms, which had not yet appeared in the Bombay industry on a very large scale. It produced many kinds of fancy sorts with high percentage of silk work. The Bombay industry not yet being used to silk chose the wrong type of material which caused very great hardships in the weaving department, resulting in a very heavy fall in the already poor wages of the women workers in winding. On the ground that they were running 40s in spinning the mill wanted to reduce half the workers in ring spinning wherein it employed a large number of women workers on wages lower than the average for the male spinners. In Jacquards they were trying new varieties, whose rates they did not want to fix on the former scale on Jacquard weaving, which was comparatively higher than other weaving rates. The whole of the Bombay industry was uncertain about these rates and was clearly experimenting as can be seen from the fact that even in December 1929, six months after the Mill-owners' Association had worked out their scheme of standardised wages and work, the Association said that they were experimenting with Jacquard and therefore could not

place any scheme before the Fawcett Committee on that section of weaving. If they were experimenting they were certainly not doing it in a laboratory. They were actually altering wage rates of the existing Jacquard weavers and testing their reaction. They were experimenting in every mill that had Jacquard looms. Naturally experiments of the mill-owners on Jacquard meant experiments on the worker's earnings and his living. In such a condition was the Pearl Mill. The workers in this mill had produced like other mills, their rank and file leaders, who were actively taking part in the organisation of the G.K.U. The worker leaders in the Spinning Section were the first to come in conflict with the mill bosses on the question of the women spinners, who were being played off from day-to-day without any wages and also on the ground of the defectiveness in the highdraft frames. When the workers told the management to carry out the necessary alterations before they could work on the frames, the management, though they had agreed with me to set the frames aright, resented the workers pointing them out the defects; and the Superintendent of the group of Fazalbhoy Mills wrote to me on 28th November 1928, asking me to stop the Union activities in the mills and to tell the workers "not to dictate their terms of working to the Spinning Master." Then there was trouble in the Jacquards also. The leadership in expressing all these grievances was taken by the workers' group in the mill, led by an intelligent Jacquard weaver by name Papa Miyan. Though no Mill Committee as such was elected in the mill, this group did all the work of a Mill Committee and brought upon its head the wrath of the bosses, who selected Papa Miyan as their special victim. They gave him less work on his Jacquard loom, did not provide him with beams; they set persons against him, and cut the beam threads in his absence thereby ruining his wages heavily. Still he would not give up leading the workers' grievances before the bosses and before the G.K.U. A Jacquard weaver of the type of Papa Miyan usually earns about Rs. 100/- or more per month, if he is supplied regularly with work. But as a leader of the workers Papa Miyan's earnings fell and that



skilled man could not even get Rs. 40/-. He had a wife and young children in his family. His wife was ill while the vengeance and hatred of the bosses towards him would not let him earn a living in spite of his great skill. There were small strikes and trouble. On 20th December he took the grievances of a few workers to the manager, who threatened him with dismissal. The mill went on strike on 22nd December, at the call of the departmental leaders. Papa Miyan had been absent for two days, and somebody gave it out that he had been dismissed. The mill struck work for him. The management maintained that the strike was caused by Papa Miyan, who was not dismissed but had resigned voluntarily his job, as he said he was disgusted with the management. In the course of the inquiry carried out by a Committee of the workers themselves, it transpired that Papa Miyan had used some such words in anger but had no intention of giving up his job. However the workers decided that as there were some grounds to say that Papa Miyan had resigned and had not been dismissed, the management should take him back. The management consented to take him back provided he undertook not to call lightning strikes. The undertaking was given by him and a few of his fellow workers, on the advice of the G.K.U. to do so, and work was resumed on 26th December. On 28th December when the Superintendent of the mills visited, a few complaints were laid before him by Papa Miyan and other workers. The Superintendent, who expected the workers to have become dumb slaves by the undertaking of 26th December, flew into a rage to find them telling him the defect in management and their grievances. He flew at them, kicked and abused them. Fortunately for him the workers held their patience. On the same day in the noon the Assistant Weaving Master in the mill, by name Davar, was killed in the Folding Department near the weaving shed. A police party was called in, which surrounded and took charge of the mill. Just when the police were being posted I arrived at the mill, accompanied by another officer of the G.K.U. The workers were taken out of the mill and one of the management staff pointed out to the police some 20 to 25 persons

from amongst them who were put under arrest. I remained there till the workers were allowed to leave the mill except those who were arrested, for whom we then proceeded to make arrangements for bail and defence. As the police had taken special note of my arrival at the mill just after the incident, two or three days after I was summoned to the Delisle Road Police Station and put under a long cross examination for over three hours as to my knowledge of the incident and the accused workers. They had arrested most of the prominent workers from all departments; but it was difficult to get evidence of their complicity. While in the police station, Papa Miyan was brought from a cell before me and was asked if he knew me and if I was the man who had told him to kill Davar. It was clear from the face of the man that he was being starved and persecuted for a confession. He of course knew me but denied that he had committed the crime or that I had asked him to do anything. The police examined me very critically as to how I came to the mill just when they were arriving there. They suggested that my arrival pointed to a previous knowledge on my part of the incident or the plan. They then wanted to know how Mill Committees were formed, and who the members were in this Mill's Committee. I explained the constitution of the G.K.U. on the matter. But as the Pearl Mill had had no Mill Committee officially confirmed by the G.K.U. there was no question of any names. As regards my arrival at the mill, it was on account of a previous appointment made by the management of the mill with me for settlement of certain disputes. The police were not satisfied with this. They hunted at the Centre Office at Ferguson Road for any records of the Mill Committee meetings in order to find out if the murder had been discussed and decided upon by the committee as a whole. But they could get none. When they got an approver from the accused, he told them that he (the approver) had phoned for me at the head office to come to the mill at 12-30 in the noon in view of the kicking incident and the consequent indignation of the workers. But the phone on his own admission was not received by me at all. On reference to the management, the police were told that the mill-

management had asked me by a letter to be at their office at 4 p.m. for settlement of disputes and that happened to be the time when police arrived on the scene and saw me there. This disappointed them and they left persecuting the accused for implicating any of the Union officers or myself.

The G.K.U. engaged four counsels for the accused who were twenty in number. One of the counsels was a barrister, belonging to the Parsi community by name Mr. B. J. Wadia (who later on became a justice of the Bombay High Court). The man who was murdered was a Parsi and it may be remembered that the managerial staff of the Bombay mills is mostly composed of Anglo-Indians and Parsis. The Parsi bourgeoisie at once approached Mr. Wadia not to take up the case for us as the murdered man was a Parsi. But Mr. Wadia did not withdraw from the case. The defence of the accused was not left to the relatives who had come to Bombay on receiving the news. The G.K.U. by a resolution of the Managing Committee of 16th January 1929 (Ex. P. 958) sanctioned money for this case. Over Rs. 3,000/- were paid to the counsels and Rs. 500/- spent on other allied matters. The case was heard by Mr. Justice Blackwell, who from his summing up to the jury and his general behaviour throughout the case appeared to be a bit vindictive and under the influence of the newspaper propaganda against the Red Flag Union. The jury returned a divided verdict. Justice Blackwell would not have it. He sent back the jury to try and see if they could get a unanimous verdict. The Jury went back, tried and saw. It returned with a unanimous verdict. All those that were selected and emphasised upon in the summing up were declared guilty and the rest not guilty. Judgment was delivered at 8 in the night in the Bombay High Court on 18th March, 1929, sentencing two, Papa Miyan and Maruti, to death, five to transportation for life, three to various terms of imprisonment and acquitting ten.

On 19th March in the night when Imperialism was distributing its armed forces in the city of Bombay to prepare for the next morning, I was writing the special issue of the *Kranti* on the Pearl Mill case, in which I wrote "the Court of the British Government has given a decision which will satisfy the friends of Capitalism....the law throughout the world is the law of the bourgeoisie". Six hours after I wrote this for the unfortunate victims of the Pearl Mill case, I myself was in the grip of that very law. The *Kranti* with this article appeared on the morning of 20th March 1929, when we were being transformed from denunciators of bourgeois law into the victims of that law.

The management kept the mill closed for some days after the incident of 29th December. They were delighted to have got rid of the worker leaders of the mill in such a manner. On 5th of January 1929, the workers were paid off their wages and the mill was reopened with completely a new batch of workers and jobbers. A complaint was brought by me before the Fawcett Committee on 21st January for wrongful dismissal and victimisation. The Committee took evidence, but ultimately ruled that the dispute was not covered by the agreement of 4th October, and they were, therefore, unable to judge it. We deliberated over the problem in the Managing Committee (Ex. P. 958 and a reference by Alwe in his statement) and it was decided not to bring out on strike the men of the Fazalbhoy group of mills, of which the Pearl Mill was one, in sympathy with the dismissed men. We had found that, due to a threat of strike in the whole of the group, the management had begun to take many of our workers back and the jobbers also were persuaded by us to engage none but the old workers. A few most marked Mill Committee leaders were however victimised, who could not get in until the mill was again faced with a strike in February in the Sizing and Drawing Departments. This is sufficient to show the policy of the G.K.U. with regards to the sectional strikes and its attitude towards the help that ought to be rendered to workers in difficulties and the way in which it was utilising the large sums of money collected from its members.

**138. The G.K.U. and the February communal riots—Exhs. P. 702, P. 858 and G.K.U. resolutions in Ex. P. 958**

At the beginning of the year 1928, every strike by the workers was being beaten, for want of organised leadership, though the workers were prepared to resist the onslaughts. There was no strong Trade Union based on the principle of class-struggle. At the beginning of the year 1929, the position had completely changed. There was a strong Trade Union, with the strength of all the textile workers solidly behind it, with large funds and a paying membership of over one lakh. The workers had begun creating a strong proletarian cadre functioning through the Mill Committees, which comprised of about 5,000 selected, conscious workers from all the mills. The G.K.U. had repulsed the underhand wage cuts and dismissals carried out by the mill-owners after the General Strike in violation of the October agreement. It had completely overcome the rivalry of the other unions. It had withstood numerous attacks on its office-bearers and organisers. Having failed to suppress the workers by these means, some sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and the imperialists tried the incitement of communal war, and the Hindu-Moslem riots of February 1929, were the outcome I have referred elsewhere (in para 101) to the Communist viewpoint on the communal question. The Hindu-Moslem problem is not a religious problem nor can its solution be ever found by treating the two categories—Hindus and Moslems—on the basis of religious, communal or caste adherence. It can be solved from the class point of view by the solution of the social problem on the basis of the class-struggle. This has been stated quite clearly, as for example in P. 702 the Moharram Manifesto of the Bombay W.P.P., and in P. 858. The bourgeoisie and imperialists in India are fully aware of this attitude. Yet they have purposely chosen to attribute the cause of the Bombay riots to the Communists in the Gimi Kamgar Union.

Bombay had not seen communal riots since 1896. But after the failure of the Non-cooperation Movement, when the imperialists seriously began to foment the Hindu-Moslem troubles in order to sidetrack the energies of the proletariat and peasantry into reactionary suicidal struggle, Bombay in spite of its having the

most class conscious working-class was affected a little. Though there were slight skirmishes, there was nothing like the mad massacres of 1926 in Calcutta. In 1929 however the imperialists and their agents finding all their attempts frustrated against the workers decided to involve them and consequently the whole city in a furious communal rioting. After the riots were over as usual the bourgeoisie asked for a thorough inquiry into the affair. On 26th February 1929 Mr. K.M. Munshi moved in the Bombay Legislative Council an adjournment of the House to discuss the disturbances. The motion was carried and according to the wishes of the House, the Government appointed on 22nd April 1929, a Committee to inquire into the February riots. Before the Committee could meet there had occurred the General Strike of the Textiles Mills on 26th April 1929 and again an attempt was made to drown the strike in a Hindu-Moslem riots, in the first week of May. The inquiry was postponed on 24th June. When the terms of reference were formulated in April, they contained no reference directly to the General Strike of 1928 or the subsequent individual mill strikes as a possible cause of the riots. Government at that time had an idea of relying either on secret instructions to the Committee or the good sense of the bourgeois in them. But the strike of 1929 affected their nerves more than they could restrain. In the second terms of reference the Government definitely mentioned the General Strike of April 1929 as a cause of the riots in May. A loyal Committee of reactionary gentlemen presided over by the Commissioner of Sind was not going to ignore the mandate of its masters.

The Committee issued a questionnaire to the press. I wrote to them for a copy of it, which they sent me in the Jail. The questionnaire contained three questions which affected us and many of the matters involved in this case. Question No. 3 was: "Were the strikes responsible for the riots? If so how far?". Question No. 8 was: "Were the attacks on the Pathans due to the fact that they were used as strike breakers or to economic reasons or to what cause?". Question No. 13 was: "Were the measures taken by the Police to protect the workers in the Oil installations adequate?". The questionnaire consisted of 26 questions. If you

examine their report, you will find that all along Communism and the G.K.U. were on their brains and the major part of the report deals with the above three questions as almost the sole matter of inquiry before them. Instead of dealing with the conduct of the police and the Government forces, about which also they had included some questions, they wrote in fact a report on the Communist influence in Bombay and how to "protect" the workers from it. I was personally present during the debate in the Bombay Council on 26th February 1929 and knew what the game was. The questionnaire of the Committee and its composition clearly showed that its report was going to be an interim condemnation of the Communists and incidentally of the Meerut accused who had belonged to the G.K.U. But in order not to allow the attempt to go uncontested as far as possible, I sent a statement on some of the questions to the Committee on 5th June 1929 which the Committee Secretariat received on 7th June. I had not with me any papers relating to the riot days for reference nor was the police report, which was published later on, available to me. The Riots Inquiry Committee received 125 written replies and examined 80 witnesses orally. During the oral examination of many prominent members of the bourgeoisie, the Committee every time asked pointedly if in the opinion of the witnesses the Communists were at the bottom of the riots. Many of them emphatically denied that the Communists had anything to do with the communal riots. A report of the evidence before the Committee appeared in the papers and from memory I can say that amongst those who refused to put the blame on the Communists were Messrs. K. F. Nariman, Lalji Narainji, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas and some others. I have already referred to the evidence of the then Hon'ble Home Member, Sir E. Hotson, in which he said that our speeches during the strikes were not of an inflammatory character as was suggested by the Committee (Para 124). In spite of this when the Committee wrote its report, it kept completely silent about this evidence. It printed in its report extracts from the speeches which are now exhibits in this case. The Committee also kept silent over my statement. It paid no heed to the evidence of the then office bearers of the G. K. U., Messrs.

Kandalkar and Joshi, who were invited to give evidence. Without a single reference or discussion of the evidence so tendered the Committee most arbitrarily reported that the G.K.U. was the basic cause of the riots; that the speeches of the Communist leaders bred contempt of law and order; that the leaders not only preached the overthrow of the Government but drilled Red volunteers; that they incited the workers to resist the Pathan blacklegs in the oil strike, which led to free fights and ultimately to the communal riots. The Committee representing on it the essence of the imperialist bourgeoisie, assisted by one Hindu and one Mohammadan bourgeois, have poured into their report their intense hatred of Communists and recommend that "Government should take drastic action against the activities of the Communists in Bombay", and secondly "during the riots immediate steps should be taken to lock up or get rid of hooligans including old offenders....., the hooligan menace being next in seriousness to the Communist menace". They wanted the Communists to be excluded by law from registered trade unions and dealt with severely "under the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure." (Page 28 of their Report). Government was satisfied with this performance. Drastic action was being taken. But the Committee was very illogical in recommending the action against hooligans. If Government were to carry out that part it would have required to lock up hundreds of the Hindu-Muslim bourgeois, who form the elite of the "hooligans and old offenders"!

But while spending their wrath against the Communists and the G.K.U., the Committee forgot to twist the facts of the riots sufficiently to suit conclusions. The facts that it quoted in its report and also in that of the police directly contradict the conclusions drawn therefrom. This was quite natural. The whole of the big bourgeoisie in Bombay and the Government were deeply disappointed to find that the workers in the city refused to be drawn into the riots, that the Communists prevented the workers from being excited into a suicidal fury, and that the Government were not given an opportunity of carrying out a pogrom. This was also reason of the contradiction between the report submitted by the



Government of India to the Assembly and that by the Secretary of State to the Parliament. While one wanted definitely to put the blame on us, the other was not quite so sure. While the gentlemen of the Committee were enthusiastically asking Government to suppress the Communists and the G.K.U., they absolved both the Hindu and Muslim bourgeoisie and the Government from any blame. With regard to the Government they state that it took all possible measures quite in time to suppress the riot. With regard to the Hindu-Muslim bourgeoisie they say that both were quite innocent and recommended that "the Muslims should trust the Hindus and the Hindus should trust the Muslims". They left it implied that both should trust the British. In fact this was not recommendation to the people but a description of the manner in which the three members of the Committee worked. The Muslim bourgeois member trusted the Hindu bourgeois member, who appropriately returned the trust; and both of them trusted the British President and all three in mutual admiration and trust condemned the workers, their class enemy.

My reply to the Committee's absurd statement and attack on us is contained in my statement sent to the Committee and completely refutes the allegations against us. The communal riots were not caused by us or the Girni Kamagar Union. They were the work of police aided by the agent provocateur, Mr. Shaukat Ali, who, once an anti-imperialist, is now the active paid agent of imperialism, planted in the bourgeois national movement to disrupt it by communal dissensions. The riots were not in the beginning communal at all, nor were they due to the oil strike to which every enemy of the workers traces them. A study of the various handbills issued by the G.K.U. (Exh. P. 951 D and the issue of the Kranti dated 23rd February 1929) would show this and would also show the efforts made by us and the G.K.U. as a whole to stop the riots.

There are three strikes which are alleged to show the existence of the communal conflict against the workers. It is absolutely incorrect to state that there was at any time any kind of a virile communal feeling amongst the workers. Though they nominally classify themselves by religion and caste, the Bombay workers are exceptionally free from the Hindu-Muslim feeling. The

working-class like that in Bombay with nearly two decades of industrial life had become class-conscious and not caste-conscious. The Bombay workers afford no ground for the mischief of the communal leaders. The three strikes in which attempt was made to import the Hindu-Muslim feeling were those in the New China Mill, the Brandbury Mill and the Burma Oil Company's installations. The trouble in the New China and the Brandbury Mills was directly due to the management and their attempts to displace the weavers and jobbers of one community by those from another. But the Riots Inquiry Committee, the police report and the reports and speeches of Government Ministers do not start with this attempts, nor do they mention these strikes in particular. All of them attack the strikes of the workers in the Oil Company's installations in the city. The oil strike began on 7th December 1928 as a result of the dismissals of a few workers. The company refused to negotiate with the Union of the workers and employed Pathans to break the strike. These blacklegs were paid double the wages ordinarily given to the oil workers, though they were not able to handle the work properly. The Pathans were also employed not so much for work as for attacking the workers. Meetings of workers and the pickets were assaulted. The Pathans looted the shops in the locality and the rooms of workers in the *chawls*. Affidavits regarding these happenings were published and complaints filed with the police. But the police had been completely under the influence of the oil company. The oil interests in India and the world are so powerful that they make and unmake Governments. They are the supreme rulers in the politics of every big state in the world. The constant recurring rate were which shake the whole world between the Standard Oil and the Royal Dutch Shell, of which the B.O.C. is a subsidiary company in India, the Teapot Dome scandal in America, and the revelations in the Oil Tariff Board Inquiry of the Government of India clearly show how Oil Imperialism controls the police, the press and all the state apparatus in its interests. The oil strikers had to fight against the power of such a powerful imperialist concern with world-wide links.

The Riots Committee says that we of the G.K.U. asked the mill workers to help the oil strikers in their defence against the Pathans

and therefore the anti-Pathan attack began. In fact it was not at all required to tell the mill workers to help the oil strike. In the area of the installations the oil and mill-workers stayed in the same chawls, and when the Pathans entered the chawls both the mill and oil workers were attacked, and therefore both joined hands in defending themselves against the attack. Moreover it is absolutely necessary for every Trade Union and class of workers to help another Trade Union and class of workers in the struggle with the employers. Moreover clashes between the oil workers and the Pathan blacklegs took place from the beginning of January to the middle of it. The Riots Committee admit that from 18th January to the beginning of February there were no attack on Pathans. Finding a difficulty to explain this they say that we were engaged in Municipal elections and therefore had no time. They also suggest that we either started or helped to spread the rumour that the Phathans were kidnapping children. Now if we were busy with the elections, it was certainly not in our interest to start such a scare. The police report shows that the scare began as early as 24th January, before the Municipal elections and in a locality with which neither mill-workers nor we had any connections. Even the police report admits that "the police have failed to trace the origin of the rumours and it is unlikely that the origin will ever be traced". But the mediocre brains on the Committee thought that they were more informed than the police, and made false remarks against us.

The police report shows that complaints were being made to the Commissioner since 24th January 1929 that there were rumours of children being kidnapped. These complaints were mostly from the non-mill areas and from bourgeois quarters. "The first known attack occurred on a motor driver in a non-mill area, according to the police report, and the news of the scare appeared in the press for the first time on 3rd February 1929 with which our paper the *Kranti* had nothing to do. During the first two days, the attack was not even specifically directed against the Pathans as such. In the attacks, not the millworkers only, but all classes and communities, Hindus, Mohammedans and Christians were found participating. The police report of 3rd February shows that a Hindu carpenter was killed in the mill area on the suspicion that he was a kidnapper.

Iranis, Gurkhas, Traders, a Greek engineer and all sorts of persons were attacked on this day. We had no idea that the scare was going to affect the millworkers to such an extent that they would close down the mills next day, the 4th February (Monday). But to our surprise we found that mills had begun to close one by one in the morning till by middle of the day almost all mills and even the railway workshops were closed. In spite of this the Police Commissioner said in his evidence that there was no general panic. He says: "I spent the whole morning of the 4th in the mill area, and while one must admit the fact that 150,000 millhands and 30,000 railwaymen stopping work indicates a panic in itself, even in these areas there was no panic, as panic is understood amongst the general population, that is to say business was going on as usual, people were going about the streets and shops were open. Panic undoubtedly there was but not a general panic". When the mills closed down we endeavoured to collect the workers altogether and tell them to go back to work. But it had no effect. They all refused and said they must go home to protect their wives and children. On the evening of the 4th, when we called the workers to the K.E.M. Maidan for a meeting as we usually did, we found to our surprise that the whole four-storied building overlooking the Maidan was full of Pathan residents. We at once cancelled the meeting (Ex. P. 951-D page 21) because we feared that the Pathans might think that the workers had assembled to assault them. But the handbill cancelling the meeting did not reach in time to the workers and when at 3 o'clock the workers began to go to the K.E.M. Maidan, the Pathans thought they were approaching their building for an attack and began throwing stones. The workers thought the Pathans were out to smash their meeting. The result was that thousands of workers flocked round our head office which was only 50 paces from the Pathans' building. In order to keep order and prevent any attack we called in our volunteers to the head office. There were armed police stationed near about. They fraternised with the Pathans and stationed themselves at a distance from the union office. The Pathans after this fraternisation came out in a body of fifty and rushed towards the head office where most of the G.K.U. leaders had assembled to explain to the workers

the necessity of resuming work and the falsehood of the rumours. When the Pathans advanced, our volunteers who were not more than thirty or forty met them and repulsed their attack with courage. The Pathans are stronger men at dagger thrust and stone throwing but do not know the lathi work while our volunteers were only lathi players. So before the Pathans could come to grips with them, the long lathis disabled them and they went back into their building. When the police found that their game was foiled, they attacked our volunteers and wounded some of them. The Police Superintendent asked us to disarm the volunteers. This we refused to do. We told him that we had no intention to aggravate matters but unless our office was protected from the attacks we could not disarm or remove the volunteers. He agreed to see that the Pathans did not stir out of their building. Of course we could not trust the promise, but we knew that the nervous shock received by the Pathans was sufficient to keep them quiet. Moreover, in order to avoid a nonsensical fight, we removed our head office to Nagu Sayaji Wadi temporarily and took away our volunteers also. Tuesday, the 5th Feb. saw many complicated developments which are described in detail in the *Kranti* of February 23rd. In the morning Mr. Alwe tried, with the aid of Mohammedan contractors whom he knew, to disarm the suspicion of the Pathans in the Abu building opposite the head office of the G.K.U. In the attempt he was attacked by a Pathan which fact was mentioned in the report of the Home Member made to the Bombay Legislative Council on 26th February 1929. The news exasperated the workers who went to the head office. The Pathans as on the previous day tried to storm the office but they were repulsed. On Tuesday the dacoit element of the Pathans was busy and began to loot shops in the bourgeois area. A large number of Pathans marched to the office of the Commissioner of Police, attack the police force there and injured six constables (Police report, page 17). This development was absolutely unexpected and the police took drastic steps. They entered the Masjids in which the Pathans had taken shelter, arrested them and removed them to a well-guarded camp. When the police force was attacked drastic action was taken by the police, but when the union offices were being raided, the police looked on or

harassed our volunteers. The reason for this attack on the Police Commissioner's office and the police force is not given by anybody, and is altogether suppressed by the Riots Inquiry Committee. But we came to know of it. In the night of Monday a new idea had got hold of the Pathans. Many of them discussed the reasons for the attack. Those days were the days of the ex-king Amanullah's popularity, of the solidarity that was being brought about between the Afghan and the Indian peoples by means of support to Amanullah and his progressively anti-British outlook. It was galling to the British to see this solidarity. It would mean a death-knell of that constant scare of the Afgan invasion on India and the excuse for which British Imperialism maintains large military forces on the Frontier and exploits the Indian treasury. They had to destroy this solidarity and brotherly feeling. They sowed the seed whereby the general attack on Pathans began. A massacre of that type was just the thing to create permanent ill-feeling between the Pathan workmen and Indian workers. Some of the Pathans who thought on these lines started a campaign amongst their groups of which the result was the attack against the police force on Tuesday.

When on one side developments were taking this turn there appeared on the scene the arch villain of the piece, Mr. Shaukat Ali, accompanied by his brother the late Mr. Mohammad Ali. They had at last got the situation they wanted and the job they were thirsting for. On Tuesday morning they gave an interview to the Times of India. The main part of the interview was a series of excited exclamations, according to the Times report, in which Mr. Mohammad Ali twice asked "what are Nimbkar and Dange doing." The Time says: "Mr. Shaukat Ali made a vehement attack on the Labour leaders, his views being endorsed by his brother". The Times of India reporter, as if according to a pre-arranged plan asked, "is it likely that the situation will develop into a Hindu-Moslem conflict, seeing that most of the victims are Moslems"? And Mr. Mohammad Ali replied "of course it will" and Mr. Shaukat Ali interjected: "I am going to organise the Mohammedans for purposes of self-defence". Mr. Shaukat Ali also observed that before the kidnapping scare started a group of Mohammedan Mills was chosen for assaults on operatives. This interview was published in the Times of India of 6th February,

1929, and is reproduced by the Inquiry Committee in their report. The Committee in its report says "Mr. Mohammad Ali has explained to us that *he especially asked the reporter not to publish the interview*. Moreover Mr. Shaukat Ali later on did his best to help in quelling the disturbances. The declaration of Mr. Shaukat Ali can be described at the worst as indiscreet, which indiscretion must be shared by the Times of India for publishing the *alleged* interview although Mr. Mohammad Ali had asked the reporter not to publish it." I thoroughly agree with the Committee that the interview was indiscreet. I also very much appreciate the foresight of Mr. Mohammad Ali in asking the reporter not to publish what was said and also the anxiety of the Committee to call it an "indiscretion". I am also amused at the crude attempt of the Committee to throw suspicion on the authority of the interview by using the word "alleged" even when the authors themselves admitted it and tried only to explain it away. I agree that it was indiscreet because it revealed the identity of the agents who turned the riots into a Hindu-Moslem fight. Mr. Mohammad Ali asked the reporter not to publish the interview because he was more far seeing and shrewd than his mountebank brother. The Committee felt chagrin because it exposed the hollowness of the Committee's conclusions. The Committee admits that the attacks in the north of the island on the 3rd, 4th and 5th February were not communal. It says: "On the 5th however it turned into a communal riot and murders were committed in the south of the island. Attacks were made first by the Pathans on the Hindus generally and then by Moslems on Hindus and Hindus on Moslems" (page 5). The attacks on the Pathans had ceased by Tuesday night but thanks to Mr. Shaukat Ali's "self-defence" a general Hindu-Moslem fight began on Tuesday evening. According to the Committee itself "the worst days of the riots were the 8th and 9th February". But unfortunately for the Communist-phobes of the Committee, the police report says that from 7th February "the mill area was comparatively calm, nearly all the outrages occurring in the area south of Byculla." In fact we had succeeded in persuading the workers to resume work from the morning of the 6th (Ex. P. 951D-P. 2, 3 and 4). And as far as the riot was concerned it was over in the north of the city that is the mill area by Tuesday evening.

The G.K.U. did everything it could to stop the mad fury that had possessed the people. We issued every day one or two handbills, telling them of the great harm they were doing to their class by such action, and impressing upon them the fact that all Hindu and Moslem workers had common interest and they must stand together as a class; while their enemies were trying to divide them in order to neutralise their class strength and their militant organisation. We were constantly going rounds the mills, distributing personally these handbills and contradicting the rumours and assuring the workers that the G.K.U. would do everything for the protection of both Hindu and Muslim workers. We distributed at least 200,000 handbills from 4th to 14th February. We did 150 miles of rounds by car each day, covering in the whole period over 1500 miles round the mills in order to stop the riots. These and other measures cost us over Rs 4,000/- and moreover the G.K.U. suffered a loss in income of nearly Rs. 20,000/-, as subscriptions to the full extent could not be recovered in February and March due to short working during the riot days.

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While the Communists and the G.K.U. were doing this the agent provocateurs like Mr. Shaukat Ali were holding meetings of the Muslims and fomenting the riots. In our anxiety to save the workers from the poison of communal feeling we even went so far as to offer to co-operate with Mr. Shaukat Ali. After seeing his interview in the press on 6th February, some of us went to see him. We explained to him the whole position and offered to issue a declaration jointly with him condemning the riots. That treacherous mountebank at the very outset refused and said, "you have come too late." Yes; too late because he had already released his gangs to start communal fighting, in "self-defence" as he called it. The trend of the casualties, their communal composition and locality, the places of firing resorted to by the military and police, the amount and locality of property looted, the composition of the arrested persons all point to the fact that though the workers' area contains 5/6th of the population of the city it was the least affected, that the working-class never resorted to incendiarism and looting,



that the rioting was never serious in the workers' locality. Appendix B of the police report shows that the highest number of casualties were on the 7th, 8th and 9th February, when the workshops and mills were working according to that very report. Appendix C shows that out of 149 fatal casualties only 36 (24 per cent) occurred anywhere near or in the workers' locality. Appendix F shows that out of 196 riot cases registered at the 13 police stations in the city only 45 (23 per cent) were registered at stations in or about the mill area. Appendix G, showing the number of rounds fired by the military and police, shows that out of 115 rounds fired by the military and 53 by the police, not one had to be fired in the mill area. However the police carried out certain arrests and these were described as the arrests of mill-workers in order to quell the riot. It would not have been surprising even if the majority of the arrested were to be mill workers as described by the Superintendent of the temporary jail created at the Worli *chawls*, though the Superintendent in his report admits that he made no inquiries about the occupation of the arrested persons and had no details. Having failed in involving them in the riots and a pogrom, the Government was likely to have harassed the workers by arresting them under the Curfew Orders and the general round up of suspected men, and they did so in some places. The action of combing out "bad localities" taken by the Government in order to restore peace was merely a blind. After Bombay had been given a taste of "Swaraj without the British Imperialist", as the imperialists like to describe the state of communal conflicts, it was high time to call back the evil spirits that had been released. But to do it suddenly would have revealed the villain of the piece and the well directed organisation behind it. So a smoke screen of a Curfew Order and combing out of "bad characters" was held before the people. The persons so combed out could not be the real aristocracy of criminals, because that would have struck at the very root of the agent provocateurs, who directed the huge crime of a communal strife. Therefore the beggars and street-dwellers were picked up, labelled as mill workers, criminals and bad characters and locked inside the prison. Having locked in such a class was not the riot bound to end? And it did end: A perfect enactment of a drama of hoodwinking the people in order to shield the imperialists agents who were behind the scene.

Last of all I mention appendix D, showing the number of shops looted, property stolen, and their locality. The police report shows that 61 shops were looted and the owners registered damages to the extent of Rs. 4,62,931-10-8. This is certainly a highly exaggerated claim and is a practice followed by the bourgeoisie in every town wherever riots have taken place. Apart from this, what is noteworthy for us is the fact not one of the shops is shown to have been located anywhere near or inside the mill locality; and all the awards given by the Courts which decided these claims of damages in 1930 were to those in B & C wards which are purely bourgeois wards of the city and miles away from the mill area.

All these data point to only one conclusion—that the mill workers, whether Hindu or Muslim, never took part in the communal riots. The assaults in the mill area were due to the temporary excitement caused by the kidnapping scare, which lasted for a very short time. The workers never looted or burnt any shops, houses etc. and during the worst days of the rioting they were working in their factories. The temporary communal deviation was checked and corrected by the strong leadership of the G.K.U. and their insistence on the class outlook. And all this was possible because of the inherent superior proletariat morality of the workers. Had not the Communist leadership aided by this proletarian morality been functioning properly, Bombay would have seen unheard of massacres on a monstrous scale. It was the Communists and the G.K.U. who kept five-sixths of the population of the city in control and prevented them from falling victims to communal pogroms.

Our attitude to the Pathans is quite different from that of the petty-bourgeoisie. It is a common idea with the petty-bourgeoisie that the Pathan is in all cases nothing but a money-lender and a hireling ruffian, always ready to be employed to commit violence on the nationalist movement, as in the case of the Bardoli movement of 1928. In Bombay city in 1927 and 1928 there was a general hatred of the Pathans for this and also for the dacoities

that were taking place on a large scale. Our critics assume that our attitude towards all the Pathans is Government by such common impression. Our critics also take the aid of our programme, in which cancellation of debts is one item. And on this they build the theory that the workers attacked the Pathans in order to make short work of their money-lenders. The police report does not give any information about the occupation of the Pathans that were killed. But if it had been a general attack on money-lenders, the destruction of property and incendiarism would have occurred in the mill area and on a very large scale. It must be remembered that our programme of cancellation of debts does not lend itself to a vulgar bourgeois interpretation of repudiation by insolvency or by a simple murder of the money-lenders. The cancellation takes place through an act of the revolutionary Government of workers and peasants, and not by the isolated individual destruction of the money-lender's books or person. It is possible that once the anti-Pathan assaults began, due to the kidnapping scare, the prevailing prejudice against the Pathans as money-lenders, dacoits and violent ruffians might have acted as an aggravating factor. But it was not one of the important motives behind the riots.

Our attitude to the Pathans is based on class outlook. Amongst the Pathans also there are worker Pathans. With the worker Pathans we pledge working-class solidarity, a bond of fraternity. For us, therefore, there is no such thing as a general "Anti-Pathan Feeling".

In this connection may also be mentioned a very significant question raised in the police report. It says: "A question naturally arises therefore why, if the Pathans were suspected of kidnapping, the majority in the South were left unmolested while the minority in the North were subjected to attack." (Note: The North of Bombay is generally the working-class area. Having formulated the question, the report draws the conclusions that the attack took place not because of any genuine kidnapping scare but because the Communists who were leading the strike in the

North advised the attack as the Pathans were blacklegging in the oil strike. Now if that were a fact, it was sufficient to have attacked the blackleg Pathans only and a general scare in the whole city was not necessary. The real answer to the question lies elsewhere. The Inquiry Committee says: "Although there were nearly two thousand Pathans *working in the docks together with* the Hindu labourers, there was not the slightest fracas between the two." (Page 17.) This fact cannot be useful to support the answer of the police to the question raised. This fact very pointedly supports the view of the Communists that class solidarity is above communal prejudices and is an antidote to them. The Pathans in the north of the city *did not work together with* the other workers. They were not workers at all and therefore had no class solidarity with them. The workers in the North, as a result, could be easily misled into believing any nonsense about the Pathans. In the South of the city, the Pathans and the Hindu workers *worked together* and therefore had a sense of class solidarity. The nonsensical kidnapping scare was believed in the South by the other sections of the population but could not affect the dock workers, who knew what their comrade Pathans were. Class solidarity of the worker Pathans and the worker Hindus was superior to their communal prejudices as the Pathans or the Hindus. We consider the worker Pathans as our comrades and therefore a communal anti-Pathan feeling cannot be entertained by the workers.

The February riot was the last attempt of the Government and a section of the bourgeoisie to drown the militancy of the workers in blood, and plant into the proletarian movement in Bombay the seeds of its destruction, just as it has done in other parts of India. Having failed in that attempt the only thing left for it was to abandon all shams of neutrality, of so-called sympathy with the trade union movement of the workers, and hurl, in all nakedness, its immense State forces against the militant unions, which it did on 20th March, one month after the riots.

(Note: this portion was read out and tendered in original to be copied out in order to save time).

**139. The false statements of Messrs. Alwe, Kasle and Kishori Lal Ghosh regarding myself, the G.K.U. and the Bombay workers with their references to Exs. P. 958, P. 395(1), P. 966, P. 967 etc.**

There are certain exhibits which I have been asked to explain, and about which some of my co-accused have made incorrect statements. I am referring to the statements of Messrs. Alwe, Kasle and Kishori Lal Ghosh. At the outset I have to make it clear that these gentlemen have every right to choose any line of defence they like and any political stand. I am forced to refer to their statements, not because they have ceased to or did not agree with me in all my views regarding the conduct of workers' movement. I even concede to them the right (and they have already exercised it) of criticising our Communist principles; but not of misrepresenting them, which they have done. They have also attributed things to the Managing Committee of the G. K. U., which it never did. If a small misrepresentation or an incorrect statement would have helped these two men to get released I would have kept quiet, leaving to the unerring common sense of the Bombay workers to find the truth about them. But the matter is greater than the release of two individuals. It is a matter that affects all the Bombay Textile workers, whom these people have misrepresented before this Court in order to appear as "good boys", and get their release, at the cost of the reputation of 150,000 workers.

I have already stated that after the General Strike of 1928 was called off and the old pre-cut wages were secured, the mill-owners, thinking that the workers were exhausted, began to reduce wages and men, mill by mill. This led to 71 separate small and big strikes till April 1929. While explaining to the Court why he had no time to take part in the work of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, though he was its member, Mr. Alwe says: "I had got such a tremendous work of the G. K. U. that I did not get time for meals from 8 A.M. to 11 P.M. My sixteen hours were spent in dealing with the workers' complaints, in carrying on talks with the owners, and in strikes caused by insignificant and

*minor things.*" (Page 974 English copy.) Since he refers to the work of the G. K. Union, that is in the period after May 1928, the strikes which he mentions must be the 71 strikes after October 1928. Mr. Alwe obviously describes these strikes as "caused by insignificant and minor things." I have already shown that in more than half these strikes, the G. K. Union secured increase of rates and of men. Though it is a fact that some of the strikes were not successful, in none, except perhaps one or two out of 71, was it ever proved that the strikes were "caused by insignificant and minor things" and unnecessarily kept our truthful President hungry for sixteen hours. That these strikes were caused by "insignificant and minor things" and were not at all justified is the conclusion of the Pearson Court of 1929. So, does not Mr. Alwe agree with that Court and therefore become a party to condemning the workers for causing baseless strikes?

In another place he says that he abused the Government because it would not intervene in the strike. It is not my business to see why he abused the Government but then he states the following proposition about the workers, which has a dangerous implied meaning. He says . . . "because, when any two parties in furtherance of their particular object come to extremes, intervention is needed and it is the duty of any ruling power to intervene thus and if it does not do that duty, it must be said to have swerved from its duty. And it was just in accordance with what I said that the Government in the end brought about a settlement between the two parties and the strike was ended" (Page 985.) This means that Mr. Alwe considers that Government should intervene in strikes if the workers and owners do not compromise. Now that is exactly what Government does when it prohibits workers' meetings, procession, picketing etc. because they show that things have "come to extremes". Similarly the Trade Disputes Act also passed for that. So Mr. Alwe approves of that Act according to the logical deduction of his proposition. Not only that. By the Act Government intervenes only when asked to do so. But Mr. Alwe wants that Government must intervene as a duty. Well, Mr. Alwe can hold that view. We do not. But he goes further and says that the General Strike was ended by this

method. It means that according to Mr. Alwe, the workers had "come to extremes", and it was the Government who kindly intervened and ended the strike. But Government had intervened three times, on 27th April (the Governor's visit), on 15th May (Sir Cowasji Jehangir's visit) and on 15th August 1928 (Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah's visit). But the strike was not ended. It ended at the fourth intervention. Why? Because the workers by their resistance to wage-cuts forced the owners to restore old rates and wages, which they were not in a mood to do on the previous occasions. That is why the strike ended. The Government Member was merely a tool of the owners to save their face. But Mr. Alwe agrees with the Government and says it intervened and saved the workers. We do not agree with this view.

Mr. Alwe in his statement has made eight points against Communists as such and against those Communists who were in the G.K.U. and the strike. Though Mr. Alwe calls himself, with assumed humility, an illiterate and ignorant person, he seems to have sufficient literacy or at least brains to pick up the abuses hurled at us, Communists, by the Prosecution and Mr. Langford James. Because all his eight points are exactly the points stated by them against us. Mr. Alwe says that we always want the workers to go on strike and to starve. We are opposed to compromise and we do not care what happens to the workers. We are after publicity. We blame the workers when the strikes fail and take credit to ourselves when they succeed. If you carefully read the address of the Prosecution and the Government complaint, it exactly says this and Mr. Alwe thus agrees with them. The Government of Bombay in their press note in February 1930 said that we used the strike for our own purposes and for revolutionary conspiracy. The mill-owners also say the same thing and Mr. Alwe also says the same thing! I have already shown what efforts we made to get the demands of the workers granted and to end the strikes. The October agreement itself was our compromise and nobody else's. After October we brought about 71 agreements, many of which are on record and which removed the workers' grievances. In face of such things, if

Mr. Alwe and along with him Mr. Kasle say the above, what is the obvious conclusion? In one place Mr. Alwe says . . . "They (Communists) were great experts in making false reports". (Page 984.) Today, we really find that we did make a "false report" when we told the workers in 1928 that Mr. Alwe and Kasle were good worker leaders, when they were actually splitting up the Union by creating a communal fight. I promise not to make such a "false report" again. But Mr. Alwe in the course of the statement has made some very "truthful reports" about which I should like to say a word as they concern me. Mr. Alwe after saying that we were against compromise while he wanted compromise, quotes Ex. P 958, A.B.C., Minute Book of the G.K.U. and takes credit for stopping the strikes in A—Shapurji Mills, B—Pearl Mills, and C—Jam Mills. If you refer to this Minute Book exhibit you will find that the solution and policy about strike B was suggested by me, about C by Nimbkar and about A no name is given, unless every unnamed credit is claimed by Mr. Alwe or Kasle. Who is expert in false reports?

There are two handbills of the G.K.U. (Ex. P 966 and 967) in which the Union volunteers are called "Red Army". The Prosecution have made a very frightening story out of them and both Messrs. Alwe and Kasle have thrown the responsibility of the handbills on me, as I was the General Secretary of the G.K.U. Now, I am quite prepared to take the sole responsibility of the handbills, if necessary and if that can save these gentlemen. But I must show that, if at all, Communists are not only "experts in making false". Speaking about these handbills, Mr. Alwe says... "It was the Secretary of the Union who issued such handbills" (Page 989). Mr. Kasle says the same thing (Page 1013). I will amend that statement and say that not the "Secretary" but the "General Secretary", that is myself, used to issue the handbills. There were two secretaries besides the General Secretary. A President and a Vice President, who claim that they negotiated with mill-owners and worked for 16 hours over 75 Mill Committees ought to know this simple fact. Having put the handbills on me Mr. Alwe says... "But when once or twice I regarded the language used by them as strange it was



necessary to bring before the Managing Committee of the Union a resolution to the effect that before issuing any handbill it should receive the sanction of the Managing Committee and it should be discussed on which subject the handbill is to be issued and what language is to be used. P. 958 contains the resolution". Mr. Kasle goes further than this and says... "The Managing Committee of the G.K.U. had reprimanded the Secretary for using words like "Red Army". Will this pair of truth experts show where in P. 958, the Minute Book, did the Managing Committee ever pass such a resolution? Unfortunately for them, the Managing Committee had complete faith in these "outsiders" (i.e. in us) and only directed that a handbill be issued. Even this it did only once on 16/10/28 just at the beginning and later on trusted its officers to do the right thing in such matters.

I will give one more specimen of the "truthful report" of Mr. Alwe, in contrast to the "untruthful" Communists. Mr. Alwe seems to be very much upset over the fact that he was not made by us a candidate for the Municipal Election on behalf of the W.P.P. though he was its member and though at one time we said that he should be elected to the Municipality. Mr. Alwe charges the W.P.P. with treacherous conduct towards him in this matter. I need not go into the details of that episode but the simple fact that Alwe's name was not on the electoral roll as a rate-payer, and the fact that no man can be a candidate unless his name is there for a specified period before the elections, ought to explain why Mr. Alwe could not be a candidate at all. If we spoke of him as one it must have been when it was not known that his name was not on the roll. Mr. Alwe's remarks against those who superseded him do not affect me personally, because I was not and never thought of becoming a candidate and as such I am not much aware of the details of the whole affair, though as a member of the W.P.P. I would have borne my share of Mr. Alwe's anger, had it been justified. But since Mr. Alwe charges me, as a Communist, with making untruthful reports, I will point out the two different things that Mr. Alwe says about this matter in his statement (leaving the further exposure of this question to those who actually superseded him in the elections). On page 973, he says "Seven or

eight months before the Municipal Election, that is at the time of the strike, these very gentlemen used to say that Alwe must be elected as the representative of the workers". Thus Mr. Alwe on his own admission was aware of the fact that we wanted him to stand for election and that we spoke about it to the workers seven or eight months in advance. Then when he found that he was not made a candidate, he says: "When I saw this difference in what they said and what they did, I thought there was some ground for danger". On page 976, Mr. Alwe forgot what he had said above and explaining a reference put to him, about his nomination by the W.P.P. as a candidate for the election he says: "Of course I did not know this. I was not even told (about that). I saw it when the document was cited against me after I was arrested and brought here. Then I was much surprised". So which is true? Whether he heard from us seven or eight months before the election that we wanted him to be elected or that we never told him about that? Which is the fact?—that he "saw the difference" and "ground of danger" long before or that he was surprised to see it after his arrest? Will Mr. Alwe take back the general and sweeping statement that Communists are experts in making false statements? Because if he does not, he runs the risk of being convicted as a "Communist" in this respect at least!

I am forced to deal with Mr. Alwe's statement because, as a co-accused in this case his capacity to do mischief is great. Alwe in his statement all along has said that he is an ignorant worker, whom we "clever outsiders" have cheated. If he means thereby that because he is an ignorant worker, I should excuse him the attack he has made on Communists generally and on me particularly, I disagree. Alwe is not an ignorant worker, but a clever man who had all along the idea of using us for his own ends. And a man who can spin out an intelligent yarn over sixty foolscap printed pages cannot certainly take shelter behind the plea that he is ignorant. However, I must also state here that he is correct when he says that he did not work with us with any ideas of winning political independence for the country or the workers as a class. But in order to prove that, he need not have spun out falsehoods regarding the strikes, the Union and our work amongst the people.

Mr. Alwe has also stated some falsehoods about the G.K.U. help of Rs. 500/- to the Bauria strike. Mr. Kishori Lal Ghosh,

another co-accused has also spent a lot of energy in explaining what he considers the mysterious way in which this help was sent and used and the terrible wrong that I did him in not sending the money to him. I will state only a few points on this question to correct the mistaken view taken by Ghosh and the deliberately wrong statement made by Alwe regarding me.

The strike of 15,000 jute workers at Bauria began in July 1928. The help of the Girni Kamgar Union was given in January 1929. We could not help the strike earlier because we ourselves were going through a strike since April 1928 and our Union had no sufficient funds to spare till December. It was in December, when some of our office-bearers went to the Jharia Session of the Trade Union Congress, that they were informed of the urgency and need of help and it was promised. When they returned, the Managing Committee of the G.K.U. was informed of the state of affairs and it sanctioned Rs. 1,000/- to be paid in two instalments for the Bauria strikers' relief. The resolution was originally moved by Bradley, as can be seen from the Minute Book (P. 958) and not by Alwe. The very keen feeling for the sufferings of the Bauria workers which, according to the imaginative Mr. Ghosh, led Alwe to move for this help seems to have come to him at a very late stage, if at all, according to the Minute Book of the Managing Committee which Mr. Ghosh has not failed to read minutely, as can be seen from his statement (Pages 1094-1095). That finally the resolution was moved by Alwe is due to the fact that generally resolutions, on which a great unanimity exists and has to be expressed particularly, are put from the chair without being debated upon. As the General Secretary of the G.K.U. authorised to remit the money I did it. I sent the money to Muzaffar Ahmed. Mr. Alwe in his statement says: "We did not know who conducted the Bauria Mill Strike or who was the President or Secretary of the Union. It was therefore decided at that time that the amount be sent by the Secretary of the G.K.U. to the address of the Secretary of the Bauria Union and that inquiry should be made as to who the Secretary was..... Why this first instalment of Rs. 500/- was sent to the name of Muzaffar Ahmed can be explained only by him who sent it to his name. Because from what I have heard here R. R. Mitra was the Secretary of the Union and Kishori Lal Ghosh its President; what

can the object be then in sending the money to the name of Muzaffar"? (Page 978.) Alwe's reference to the decision, if it is to be taken as found in the Minute Book of the G.K.U. on 16th January 1929, says nothing about the inquiry regarding the Secretary of the Bauria Union or the person to whom the money is to be sent. The resolution in the Minute Book (Ex. P. 958) simply contains the sanction of the help. On the contrary I can say that we did mention the fact that the money would be sent to Muzaffar Ahmed whose name was not unknown to Alwe. An active President, who says that he supervised the work of all of us and "an ignorant worker" who states that he conducted the work of 75 Mill Committees, and negotiations of 71 strikes and signed all correspondence, (see his statement page 984) must have seen the reference to Muzaffar Ahmed in Ex. P 954 on date 4/1/29 and his interest in Trade Union matters as also his work amongst the Calcutta workers from the references in Kranti to the Scavengers' strike. Mr. Ghosh suggests that the money was sent to Muzaffar's address in accordance with the decisions of the Party (Page 1095). Now Mr. Ghosh as well as anybody else had the Minute Book of the W.P.P. when he wrote the statement. Will he show any decision therein as regards the G.K.U. help to the Bauria strike? Mr. Ghosh says that the G.K.U. resolution does not suggest that the money be sent to Muzaffar Ahmed. True; but it also does not suggest that it should be sent to Mr. Ghosh. In criticising my conduct in this matter Mr. Ghosh does not forget to bring in constitutional considerations and says that I violated all trade union constitutional practices and was guided by purely Party considerations which, he says, "weigh with Communists so much". (Page 1095.) Mr. Ghosh says that I was the Assistant Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C., as also the General Secretary of the G.K.U. and I should have sent the money either through the treasurer of the A.I.T.U.C. or to the Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the T.U.C. that is to himself. If constitutional considerations are to weigh more than Party considerations, why was the circular asking for help to the Bauria strike issued over the name of Mr. R. R. Bakhale, Assistant Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C. and not over my name or jointly with me, though I was a Joint Asstt. Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C.? Was it not Party consideration that influenced Mr. N. M. Joshi in asking Bakhale

and not me to issue that? Then why was not the help directed by the appeal to the Treasurer of the B.T.U.F. or the Treasurer of the Bauria Jute Workers' Union directly? The struggle was being conducted by the Union there and help should have gone to the General Secretary of the Union who was R. R. Mitra. Instead of that why does Mr. Bakhale in his appeal write that he would send the contributions to "Mr. K. Ghosh who is conducting the struggle through the Bengal Provincial Committee"? In fact Mr. Ghosh and Mr. Joshi wanted their Party to keep control. So he once trotted himself out as Secretary of the Bengal Trade Union Federation if you insisted on sending things to a "Secretary" and once as President of the B.J.W. Union, if you insisted on doing things through a "President". While the President of the former and the Secretary of the latter were never mentioned in the correspondence or appeals. So what wrong was there if I sent the money to Muzaffar Ahmed who also, if you so much insist on constitutional grounds, was a vice-president of the B.T.U.F. and whom I knew better than anybody else? On Page 1094 of his statement Mr. Ghosh makes a suggestion, which is aimed at me and Bradley, that "the information about the G.K.U. money being sent to Muzaffar Ahmed was given to me not by Bradley or Dange but by Mr. Bakhale. I doubt whether I should have heard of the money at all, till perhaps considerably later". Mr. Ghosh is not straight enough to say plainly what he really means to say. If, as he insinuates, I had not wanted him or the public to know that the G.K.U. had sent the sum to Muzaffar, the letter from me to Muzaffar of which Mr. Ghosh quotes only a fraction on Page 1095 would have been differently worded or not sent at all. It is expressly stated therein, [P 395(1)]: "You will also kindly acknowledge this help in the Calcutta papers, whose copies should be sent for our record". If only Party considerations had weighed with me more than the consideration of the workers' struggle, I should not have written in the same letter the following: "If there is a Union leading the strike and commanding allegiance, so much the better". The Party that is leading the strike correctly is asked to administer the money only in case there is no such union. Mr. Ghosh is wrong when he says that capital P. of Party in the letter means the W.P.P. If it was so, it was unnecessary to add the qualifying clause to the word Party.

What I had in mind was the experience of Bombay. I wanted to avoid the money being used by a union that might manage to take the lead somehow but may not command allegiance of the workers, or a party or group of persons, who might plant themselves on the strikers but may be giving them a wrong lead; and I cannot help it if any of these descriptions applied to Mr. Ghosh and led to the present tragedy. Mr. Ghosh reads a specially communistic meaning in my behaviour. But what has he got to say when I point out to him the fact that Mr. Tom Shaw, when he sent £600/- from the International Textile Workers for the relief of the Bombay strikers, sent them to Mr. N. M. Joshi, not as the General Secretary of the A.I.T.U.C. or as the President of the B.T.L.U. but to him personally with directions to use the money in the manner he would like? Was there anything communistic in him also? The fact is that every person, who knows something of party working in modern life, is guided by party considerations; and I am not at all ashamed of the fact that this consideration did weigh with me when I sent the money, but it was not the sole consideration. However, the main point of Mr Ghosh's contention is to prove that he had nothing in common with the Communists and the W.P.P. and I readily grant that, hoping it may give peace and safety to his absolutely constitutional, independent and non-party soul.

The third gentleman who has tried to qualify himself for release by abusing the Communists is Mr. Kastle. Mr. Kastle's denunciation is more crude and he has directly told the Government and the Court that we made secret plots. He says "Uptil now I spent the days of my life in solving the question of livelihood...but when these five or six persons from Bombay joined the strike, (there came in) somewhere secret conspiracy.. I had no connection with such secret plots of these persons" (Page 1017). Is this not a pure confession and an attempt to give evidence against us?—that we were making secret plots, but Mr. Kastle had nothing to do with them? Now there was no necessity to tell the Court that we made secret plots. He could have said, if he was honest, that he for himself had nothing to do with our principles or politics, whatever it was. But perhaps Mr. Kastle wants our conviction more than his release?

In one place Mr. Kasle has constructed a more igneous falsehood than his brother could. He divides the thirty members of the Joint Strike Committee amongst three unions, ten for the B.T.L.U. (Mr. Joshi's section) and fifteen for the G.K.M. (our or his section) and five for the Mill Workers' Union (Jhabwala's section). Mr. Kasle seems to have learnt from some half-baked lawyer that the essence of defence against conspiracy charge lies in breaking all connections and links of agreement with the accused. So, the poor fellow worked hard to show that we five "outsiders" on the Joint Strike Committee were not from that Union to which he belonged. So he says that we five, that is Jhabwala, Dange, Nimbkar, Mirajkar and Bradley, were nominated on behalf of Jhabwala's Union, while the G.K.M. nominated all fifteen workers. Now all this part of Mr. Kasle's statement regarding the Joint Strike Committee is a tissue of palpable lies. In the first place, the B.T.L.U. had not ten but fifteen out of thirty seats on the Joint Strike Committee. The compromise leading to the Joint Strike Committee was based on this very understanding that Mr. Joshi's section will have half the seats on the Committee and our section the remaining half (vide the Fawcett Report and the evidence of the P.W. 245, whom Mr. Kasle himself refers to in his statement). Secondly, we were not at any time members of Jhabwala's Union. On the contrary, we and Jhabwala were on the G.K.M. as can be seen from the statement of Alwe and the Minute Book of the G.K.M. (Exh. D. 420). Thirdly, the fifteen names of the representatives of the G.K.M. on the Jt. Strike Committee as given by Kasle are wrong. The fifteen members from our section, at the time of forming the Committee were as follows:—

1. S. A. Dange, 2. R. S. Nimbkar, 3. B. F. Bradley, 4. S. S. Mirajkar, 5. S. H. Jhabwala, 6. Baburao, 7. Trimbakrao, 8. A. A. Alwe, 9. Tamhanekar, 10. Kadam, 11. Pednekar, 12. Gadkari, 13. Avsekar, 14. K. Desai, 15. Kasle. From time to time if any member went out of Bombay or was absent he was substituted by others. What Mr. Kasle has done is to omit the first seven names altogether and put seven other names in their places, of those persons who later on were substituted for absentees. Mr. Kasle

says he is an ignorant worker, put into trouble by clever outsiders. But ignorant workers do not construct such falsehoods.

Both Alwe and Kasle have declaimed against persons whom they call "outsiders"—that is those organisers of trade unions and participants in the working-class struggle, who are not actually workers. This "outsiders' controversy" is as old as the beginning of the first strike in India. The employers and Government have broken many strikes and unions simply because there were a few educated persons in them, whose services were put at the disposal of the workers. The workers broke down the opposition of the Government and the employers in the matter by insisting on their right to use the services of whomsoever they liked for their interests. When on one side the workers overcame the opposition of Government and capitalists, men like Alwe and Kasle are springing up to erect new barriers in the way of the workers taking the help of educated persons, who have a revolutionary desire and capacity to serve the working-class and lead it to victory. I can understand the opposition of Government and capitalist to "outsiders" coming in the workers' movement because the "outsiders" help the workers in getting a broader outlook at the beginning of the movement and with their education, of which the workers are deprived by the Government and the bourgeoisie, they can understand and expose Capitalism intellectually in a better manner. But why should Alwe and Kasle take up the position of Government and capitalists and be even more reactionary than they and oppose all "outsiders" as such?

It is a fact that the workers' movement is used by many of the petty-bourgeois educated persons for making a career for themselves. But at the same time have there not been young educated persons, who have suffered for the sake of the workers and peasants, without any other motive except that of emancipating them from Imperialism and Capitalism? But Alwe and Kasle object now to all educated persons coming into the workers' movement and when you consider along with this the fact that they do not want the workers to take to the movement of political independence, their obvious motive becomes clearer. The effect of such a policy can be only to isolate the workers from all



movement of emancipation, enlightenment and joining hands with those sections of the middle-class youths, who are fighting for national freedom. Thus they indirectly surrender the workers into the hands of Imperialism.

The most powerful reason which has prompted these gentlemen against "educated men" and "outsiders" is not that some of these men have spoiled the workers' movement. The reason seems to be personal. Mr. Alwe scented the "danger from outsiders" (page 973 of his statement) when he found that after seven months of expectation and dreams of becoming a municipal counsellor, he could not become one. But like a shrewd man, that he is, Alwe is cautious, while Kasle has spoken the truth more plainly. He is against "outsiders" because he thinks that we "outsiders" brought him into the jail. He says (page 1017): "By coming into the strike of us workers, these persons did, on the contrary, only one thing. The securing of all the demands remained aside but a poor worker like myself had to come to the Meerut Jail and to suffer and groan for two and a half years." That is the real cause of their wrath against us. They want leadership, but they do not want the sufferings that follow it. They want the workers' movement, but they do not want it to take the road of political freedom, for a simple look in that direction has led them to the Meerut Jail. Mr. Kasle says: "I finish my statement with the humble request that none of my co-workers should let themselves be influenced by such persons." But the worker-brothers, who in every strike are victims of firing and death, who in 1907 at the time of the arrest of Lok. Tilak (who was, by-the-bye, a complete "outsider" and "educated person") demonstrated and struck work for political freedom and suffered death by firing, who in 1921 days shook Imperialism, though the movement was led by another "outsider," and who since 1928 have suffered still more sacrifices, know very well whether to trust the revolutionary leaders, no matter whether outsiders or insiders, who work for their class good, or those like these two excellent gentlemen who begin to "groan," complain and betray those with whom they worked as soon as they see the Meerut prison. My friend Kasle, in whose very presence, British law convicted the Pearl Mill workers to

death in Bombay in 1929, and who has seen how British Courts have convicted thousands of workers and peasants to life transportation, as in the China Mill Case in Bombay and the Chirner, Sholapur, and Satara Cases in connection with the national movement for political and economic freedom, has developed so much faith in British Law and Justice that when he was asked if he wanted to give any defence witnesses, he trusted that "the Court can decide justice or injustice without the help of witnesses" (page 1018). And above all, he exhibits this trust when already this Court in its bail order of 7th May 1931 on their application has exhibited its class prejudice against *all workers as such* when it said, "*As both are labourers* the danger of their absconding cannot be neglected" (page 18 of Order), which means that workers as a class have no credit or social status in the country, which they can offer as security for their bail.

Mr. Kasle is so much in a hurry to get himself dissociated from us that in his attempt he has betrayed his friend Alwe also, who on the last page of his statement has trusted him to do many good things for him (page 992). His first argument is that all the bad deeds against the Government were done by us and he had no hand in them. Then if the Government blames him for remaining with people like us in the Union he throws the whole blame of bringing us in the Union on Mr. Alwe's shoulder. He says that he personally was opposed to our entering the G.K.M. "But Mr. Alwe brought these persons in....," and a few lines above "If Mr. Alwe had not given an assurance about them they would not have got an entrance at least into our workers' movement". (page 1016.) So, according to Mr. Kasle, if there was a crime in bringing us to the G.K.M. it was done by Alwe. "Hang everyone if you want but not me" is the purport of Mr. Kasle's prayer.

However, both Alwe and Kasle have spoken the truth when they say that they had nothing to do with politics, that they held no opinions advocating political freedom for the workers from Imperialism. I can certify the fact that they knew very little of my politics. If not then at least their present statements are sufficient to show that they have no desire for the complete emancipation of the working-class from Capitalism and Imperialism. Mr. Kasle is

also partially right when he says, "Mr. Dange was making a conspiracy against me in order to get me out of the Union". (page 1014.) I say partially because I was not making a conspiracy but openly writing in the *Kranti* against the mischief of Kase in inciting communal quarrels in the Union on the Brahmin and non-Brahmin question. There was no need for conspiracy because the workers at Shivdi and Morbag were openly denouncing him in a handbill in March 1929.

In summing up my reply to the statements made by both these co-accused of mine against me, I can say with regard to Mr. Alwe that it is ridiculous to charge him with revolutionary conspiracy to establish a workers' Raj, when he himself in his statement says, "...the speeches that were being made to the effect that the workers' Raj must be established were regarded by me only as empty talk". (pages 985-986.) You cannot take emptiness seriously! As regards Mr. Kase, he says about himself this, "As I am ill, my head is not steady..." (page 1016). In fact Mr. Kase's unsteadiness began long ago and increased rapidly since 20th March 1929! Since his head is not steady the less said of him the better!

D/- 4.1.1932

#### **140. The Tramwaymen's Union**

The second union in the list of my "trade union crimes", is the organisation of the Bombay Tramwaymen's Union. (Address of Mr. James.) The Prosecution alleges that this Union was also organised in accordance with our plan to get a stranglehold on every important industry and as transport is very important, we began to build up a union of tramway workers and to work up the aims of the conspiracy through it. It is a fact that when I was arrested I was the General Secretary of the Tramwaymen's Union as also of the *Girni Kamgar Union*.

The Bombay Electric Supply and Tramway Company Ltd. (B.E.S.T.) is one of the biggest and most profitable companies in Bombay. The position of this company is more peculiar than that of the railways and stronger also, if you consider it even from the

ordinary capitalist point of view. The railway companies that were originally floated to build up railways in India had to import heavy capital into India, and do all the initial work of survey, engineering, cutting off ways through mountains and over rivers etc. The traffic also was not assured to them. The case of the B.E.S.T. is different. The railways built up their traffic; while in Bombay the traffic created the tramways, and the B.E.S.T. now has a stranglehold on the vast mass of the Bombay middle-class and workers. The B.E.S.T. got the roads ready from the Municipality of the city. The cotton mills created the city and the city then asked for the tramways. The result is that a few capitalists floated a company; the Municipality gave them the roads, the monopoly of transport and later on the monopoly of electric supply. A group of capitalist began to fatten on the life on the whole city.

The railways when they pass through a new country, bring the markets within reach of the peasant, aid the movement of commodities and discharge a very important function in social economy. The Bombay tramways compared to this stand on a lower level of an organised fulfilment of a social function. Their customers are assured to them. The needs of the city life compel thousands of men to put into their hands an anna each per day. The B.E.S.T. is a monopoly giant fed by the city, living on the licence of the citizens' municipality and yet it defies the city, the citizens' Municipality!

The B.E.S.T. makes every year a net profit of nearly fifty lacs. During 1931, the year of severest depression, it declared a dividend of 14% because the B.E.S.T., is a monopoly giant and the citizens, the middle-class and workers must use its trams to earn their daily bread.

The B.E.S.T. is a company whose President, at the time when we formed a Union of its workers, was Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, and there is scarcely a rich man in Bombay who has not a scrip of the B.E.S.T. stocks. This patriotic gentry, however, always called managers from America to organise its business, and the principle of Indianisation was reserved in the books of resolutions that came out every year from patriotic bodies. What

was the attitude of this Company, owned by Indians, managed by foreigners and licensed and given monopoly by the Municipality of "citizens" towards its workers?

The formation of a Union of the tramway workers was not a new thing that I did. The tramway workers had a Union of theirs in 1922, led by Messrs Chaman Lal and Pawar. The Union had at that time a larger membership than in 1928. In 1922, the men on the traffic lines, the conductors, ticket collectors etc. were in the Union, while in 1928, the Union was limited only to the workshop-men at the Kingsway workshops at Dadar, Bombay. The company had refused to recognise the Union, even when it was under the leadership of Chaman Lal and Pawar, and though it commanded a large membership. When the Company refused to recognise the Union and speak with its representatives, Messrs Chaman Lal and Pawar, the workers struck work on 17th September 1922. The Company sustained some loss as the traffic workers stopped all work on the lines. But the strike was broken with the help of imported labour and police aid. This Company of the Indian bourgeoisie was so much mindful of the welfare of its worker-countrymen and their right to form their own organisations that according to the Labour Gazette of November 1922, "about 1,300 members of the Union were dismissed from the Company's service". The Company did not stop at that. It considered all the old workers as dismissed from service and re-engaged the new and old workers on a fresh contract of service, which so far as the Company's obligations went, was on a daily basis. All the workers were considered as "daily wage-earners" and musters and records were maintained on this basis. But actually payment of wages was made monthly, the bonus and provident fund calculations were all done on monthly service basis. The new classification was introduced to facilitate immediate dismissal of any worker, without liability to pay him notice period wages. This was the immediate case of my being called upon to engage in the work of the Tramway Union in 1928.

The strike of 1922 had killed the Union and there was no Union till 1927 April, when a new Union was formed by Jhabwala. In the first month it had, I think, about 50 members and all of them

were from the Dadar workshop of the Company. The Union after the first month sank into inactivity. In March 1928, the Company gave notices to 200 workers out of the 800 in the workshop that they would be dismissed as the Company had no work for them. Such a heavy retrenchment in spite of the profits of half a crore, caused grave discontent and the Union sprang into life again. Meetings were held and resolutions passed protesting against the action of the Company and the indifference of the Municipality which gave license to such a Company to exploit the city. But there was no proposal of a strike. Our simple demand at the time was that retrenchment must be stopped. A report of the meetings and resolutions was sent to the Company by the Union but the Company refused to recognise the Union or speak with its representatives. They insisted that the Company would recognise the Union on condition that its constitution was approved by the Board of Directors and that it did not admit as its office-bearers or members, any one who was not an employee of the Company. The reply meant a direction to the Union to become a Company Union, acting according to the advice of the Company who did not want the Union to take the help of any independent organisers or advisers in its work (Ex. P. 1744 Kranti, dated 8th July, 1928). The reply to the Company's conditions was that a trade union had every right to engage anybody's services in its work; and it would send a copy of its constitution for information to the Board but not for its approval or disapproval. After this the Company ceased to correspond with the Union. But the attitude of the workers had the desired effect. We succeeded in putting the whole matter before the President of the Board of Directors, who at that time was Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas. Three amendments were made, as a result, by the Company in its retrenchment policy. They reduced the number to be retrenched, which was originally fixed at 200. They had first given 24 hours notice. But now they agreed to pay one month's notice pay to those who were retrenched. The Company usually pays at the end of each year, a bonus to its employees, which the retrenched workers would have received if they had been in service a month or so or more. The Company agreed to pay the bonus in advance to the retrenched men.

Amongst the retrenched were some of very long-standing service who, if they had been in service for a year or so, would have, according to the contract of their service, received a higher gratuity from the Company. This fact also was forced on their consideration. This small success of the Union gave confidence to the men and almost all the men in the workshop became members of the Union. The membership according to the annual report of the Union was 881 during 1928-29.

The management had promised to the deputations that had been sent to them by the workers before this Union was formed that they would revise the rates of pay in the workshop. The basis of this promise was that the nature of work done in the workshops had considerably changed since the rates of wages were fixed. The original rates were based on the railway coach-building workshops, while the work in the tramway workshop was of a superior kind, since the Company improved its designs of coach-building and had also introduced a new pattern bus service. In order to get the promise fulfilled, we formulated a new set of wage rates and promotions and submitted it to the Company, which as usual refused to discuss it with the Union as such. The proposals were published in the *Kranti* dated 12th and 19th July 1928 (P. 1744). In spite of all our efforts, nothing was done by the management in the matter. It still maintains its insolent attitude of not recognising the Union, though lately the Company has been forced by the workers to negotiate with the Union representatives (two of whom were "outsiders") on the question of partial closing of the workshop (Agreement dated 19th October 1931). That is the attitude of the Indian bourgeoisie, an Indian Company, even when the Government of India, the Government of foreign bourgeoisie, has no objection to negotiate with the Railwaymen's Federation and the "outsiders" in it.

The Prosecution have not put into exhibit my activities in connection with the Tramwaymen's Union. The Crown Counsel mentioned it in his address but could find nothing to put before this Court, though as can be seen from the *Kranti* and the A.I.T.U.C. Bulletin (D 390) meetings of tramway workers were held, attended and addressed by some of us. What is the reason of

the silence of the Prosecution over this branch of my Trade Union work? According to them, we conspire through every available Union, every available meeting of the workers. Why not the Tramway Union then, a key in the life of Bombay? The reason is plain enough. The fact is we "conspire" through no Union. Our attitude and principles are everywhere the same. The Prosecution want to smash the militant trade unions, and such as immediately threaten the profits of the bourgeoisie and the Government on a large scale by means of strikes and refusal to accept wage reductions. The Tramway Union was not a big Union; it threatened no strike. Our speeches only discussed the question of retrenchment and the problem of recognition of the Union. We were powerless to bring about any strike on the lines. Since the Union was not strong, the "conspiracy" was not deep enough for the Prosecution to seize, search and bring the records of that Union in this case. This would show that it is not revolutionary conspiracy that you are trying but the big and militant trade unions that you are trying to smash. Since the Tramway Union was a small one limited to one workshop only, it escaped the mutilation by searches and arrests and the coils of this case in March 1929, but the workers could not escape an attack on their earnings and as soon as they resisted they were faced with the police force and lathies of the Government and the management in October 1931.

#### **141. The All-India Trade Union Congress—its formation and the attitude of the National Congress towards it**

The working-class in its struggle against Capitalism is obliged to unite industrially, nationally and internationally. In their direct struggle with the employers each section of the workers forms trade unions, but just as the employers form national federations of their own to protect their economic class interests, the workers have to unite their unions on an all-national basis. The All-India Trade Union Congress represents the national unity of the trade unions of the Indian workers.

But the present All-India Trade Union Congress did not come into existence for this specific purpose, and it is one of



the accusations against us in this case, that we imported class-struggle, political struggle, a revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle into a Trade Union Congress, which was meant to further the economic interests of the workers by legitimate and peaceful methods. The A.I.T.U.C. was founded in 1920, and its first Congress was held in Bombay in October 1920 under the presidentship of the nationalist bourgeois leader Lala Lajpat Rai, who by his stay in America had come to possess a reputation of being a "socialist," which ultimately turned out to be unfounded. The immediate incentive to the formation of the Congress was not the developing revolutionary struggle in the country, nor was it due to any all-national emergency affecting the trade union struggle of the workers as such. The imperialist powers deliberating over the Versailles Treaty were threatened with the revolutionary movement of the workers in their countries and in order to co-ordinate their national-imperialist policy towards the workers on an internationally agreed imperialist basis, they had decided to institute a powerful watchdog institution. The outcome was the Washington Conference and the International Labour Office of Geneva. The Conference had recommended that each nation should send representatives of its trade unions through its Government, and the Government of India, accepting this, announced that they would send Indian representatives on the recommendation of trade unions here. In India there was no body that could make any recommendation on behalf of all trade unions or workers; so a body had to be founded. All the fashionable trade unionists who were tempted by the prospect of free trips and an international status united to form an All-Indian Trade Union Congress. There were also many real trade union workers who seeing the necessity of an All-India unity of trade union, joined hands with the fashionable group, since there was very little of trade union activity to warrant separate organisations or non-co-operation with the pseudo-labour leaders. The All-India Trade Union Congress was founded and its First Congress was held in the most fashionable bourgeois quarters of Bombay. Not the needs of the working-class struggle, but the prizes offered by Imperialism, was the immediate incentive of the A.I.T.U.C.

The main purpose of founding the T.U.C. was served and Government accepted its recommendations of Indian delegates to the International Labour Conference at Geneva. The Second Congress was held at Jharia in 1921 under the Presidentship of Mr. Baptista, and the Third Session at Lahore in 1923, where Mr. C. R. Dass presided. This period of 1920-23 was one in which the Indian workers, peasants and middle-classes rose in revolt and offered battle to Imperialism. It was a period when the European proletariat was bidding for class-power. Did all this affect the T.U.C., the so-called organisation of the Indian workers in any way? Not one union did represent the militant workers who presented Bombay in complete darkness to the Prince of Wales when he landed there in 1921. The workers who were spontaneously taking part in the nationalist movement for political freedom were not in the Trade Union Congress at all. And the representatives, who went to Europe came back to India, without understanding a bit of the mighty proletarian movement there.

The founding of the T.U.C. as a separate national organisation of the workers as a class, however, roused the jealousy of some of the bourgeois nationalist leaders, and the danger it presented to their organisation, if the T.U.C. were to become a really active body functioning on class lines, was apparent. Mr. C. R. Dass in his Presidential Address to the Gaya Session (December 1922) of the Indian National Congress advised the nationalists to organise the workers and espouse their cause and he gave this reason for his advice: "If the Congress fails to do its duty, we may expect to find organisations set up in the country, by labourers and peasants detached from you, disassociated from the cause of Swaraj, which will inevitably bring into the arena of the peaceful revolution class- struggles and the war of special interests. If the object of the Congress be to avoid this disgraceful issue, let us take labour and peasantry in hand....." When thousands of workers and peasants were falling victims of imperialist firing aided by zamindars and the bourgeoisie, Mr. Dass was calling their struggle "a disgraceful issue," and asking the middle-class petty-bourgeois, whom he was

addressing, to take labour and peasantry in hand, (let *us* take *them* in hand). In order to protect the bourgeoisie from being attacked by the class-war of the workers, and also in order to forge some weapon exclusively in his hands to aid him in his fight against the orthodox non-co-operators, Mr. Dass tried to infuse political ideals into the Trade Union Congress by presiding successively over its two sessions at Lahore (1923) and Calcutta (1924). But as soon as the political ferment around cooled down and his political programme of Council Entry was secured, he became indifferent. From 1920 to 1924 the Trade Union Congress had as its president the biggest leaders of the nationalist bourgeois movement, which was aimed against British Imperialism. But not one of these presidents had advised the T.U.C. to refuse to associate with the thoroughly imperialist I.L.O. at Geneva. They were non-co-operating with Imperialism, but they were willing to let the working-class organisations remain under the imperialist and capitalist influence of the I.L.O. because both they and the imperialists had the same attitude towards the workers.

The organisation of the Trade Union Congress was not welcomed in any better spirit by the National Congress. As soon as the T.U.C. Session was held at Bombay in October 1920 the National Congress in December 1920 at Nagpur, awakened to the necessity of organising the workers and passed the resolution: "This Congress is of opinion that Indian Labour should be organised with a view to improve and promote their well-being and secure to them their just rights and to prevent the exploitation (1) of Indian Labour (2) of Indian resources by foreign agencies" (Volume I page 35 of Congress Resolutions published by the A.I.C.C.). The resolution is directed against the exploitation of Indian labour by foreign agencies, but is silent about exploitation by Indian agencies, when at this very time the Bombay Textile workers were striking against their Indian masters for increase in wages to compensate a rise in the cost of living. In the true capitalists language it talked of "their just rights", as if there are "unjust rights" also. With a flourish the A.I.C.C. appointed a Sub-Committee of eleven to carry out labour organisation work

(1st January 1921) (Volume I page 59). The eleven ladies and gentlemen did nothing. So the Working Committee at Calcutta on 2nd February 1921 asked Mr. C. R. Dass to give effect to the resolution of Nagpur (Vol. I page 86). When four months later, one member of the Committee asked for Rs. 1,500/- to carry out the work, the Working Committee of the Congress at its Bezwada Meeting shelved the proposal to the Sub-Committee for report (April 1921) (Vol. I page 91). However the workers themselves never waited for the patriotic angels to come to them to show them the path of their salvation. They took to their own line of demonstrations and support to the national movement of freedom, in spite of the distrust and the cold attitude towards them manifested by the Congress leaders, who addressed the workers of Bombay as "hooligans", on their demonstrations at the Prince of Wales landing. For more than a year after this the Congress forgot its resolution on Labour. The political movement was betrayed, the petty-bourgeois leadership collapsed. When everything was lost, in its leisure hours, the Congress again turned to Labour, and the Working Committee at Calcutta in November 1922 gave its "opinion" that the resolution passed at Nagpur "Should be carried out without further delay" (Vol. I page 223). Next month at the Gaya Session, December 1922, the Congress gave up the former resolution of separately organising the workers and by a new resolution welcomed the A.I.T.U.C. and appointed a Sub-Committee this time "to assist the Executive Council of the A.I.T.U.C. for the organisation of Indian labour, both agricultural and industrial". The New Committee consisted of six members, of whom one was M. Sringaravelu Chettiar, who later on was one of the accused in Cawnpore Communist Conspiracy Case of 1924. It is noteworthy that none of the old heroic Committee of eleven was found on this Committee (Vol. I page 236).

The nationalist bourgeoisie, as the candidate for the next Government of the country, learns the lessons of Government: at the hands of Imperialism and practises them on its rival, the workers and peasants. One lesson is to hoodwink the people by

commissions and committees and to avoid to do a work by pleading want of funds. The Working Committee remembered that the Gaya Congress in December 1922 had appointed a labour organisation committee, in February 1923 when it met in Bombay and appointed Dr. Sathaye as convener for it and sanctioned Rs. 200/- for initial expenses and asked for "a plan of work, if any", (Vol. I page 254). The Committee seems to have thought or slept furiously over "the plan of work, if any", and the convener submitted proposals in July which were graciously considered by the Working Committee in August 1923. In the true fashion of a body that aspires to take the place of the Government of India it resolved "that Dr. Sathaye be informed that the scheme will be considered in detail after circulation among the members of the Working Committee and that meanwhile Dr. Sathaye be informed that considering its present financial condition, the Working Committee does not hope to be in a position to adopt the scheme this year or to give effect to it. Under these circumstances, Dr. Sathaye is requested to reconsider his application and make fresh proposals, if any". The Committee has no funds; even if it has, it does not hope to give effect to the scheme. It asks for fresh proposals and still says that the scheme will be considered in detail after circulation. Can any Home Member of the Government of India even beat this piece of hypocrisy?

The matter was again pressed before the A. I. C. C. by Dr. Mukherjee at Coconada on 1st January 1924 (Vol. II page 2) and it was sent up to the Working Committee, who at the Bombay meeting (Vol. II page 12) on 1st February 1924 postponed the consideration "in view of the present financial condition". All these resolutions were being passed when the "just rights" to live of the workers in Ahmedabad and Bombay were being attacked by a wage-cut of 15% in the former and stoppage of bonus in the latter. In the Bombay strike, when assistance for relief work was asked, the Working Committee in its meeting of 23rd April 1924, (Vol. II page 19) pleaded the same excuse. The Nagpur Congress of 1920 noted the existence of workers in India and the necessity of organising and protecting them; the Gaya Congress, two years

later appointed a Committee to co-operate with the Trade Union Congress in their work and then everybody decided not to do anything in the matter. The Coconada Congress of 1923 and of Belgaum in 1924, refused even the philanthropic reference to the programme of labour organisation. This omission of hypocrisy was corrected at the Cawnpore and Gauhati congresses in 1925 and 1926 which reinserted the clauses on "the organisation of labour, both industrial and agricultural, the adjustment of relations between employers and workmen and between landlords and tenants" (Vol. III page 25 and Vol. IV page 61).

In this long period of six years there were big strikes in the industrial centres, accompanied by firing by Government forces, called in by the Indian and European employers. But in the Annual Reports of the General Secretary of the Congress, none of them are even mentioned. When such was the attitude of the central organisation, the Provincial Committees followed the same line and every subordinate committee imitated the central in appointing labour sub-committees and ultimately doing nothing or openly siding with the employers against the workers in Bombay. The Congress deliberately and systematically followed the policy of keeping the working-class away from political consciousness and organisation, and refused to espouse the economic struggles of the working-class whether against Indian or foreign employers.

When the tide of active politics went down, the nationalist bourgeois leaders were not to be found in the ranks of the Trade Union Congress. After the Calcutta Session of 1924, the Presidentship of the Congress was conferred on men, who though not workers, were interested in trade unionism. Their ideal, of course, was in no way better than that of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Politically they were even backward and reactionary. But they had one virtue. From whatever motives, they struck to organising trade unions and though they desired to use them for keeping the workers away from class-struggle and within the hold of Geneva Imperialism, the objective effect of their work was a more or less stable growth of trade unions among sections of workers.

**SECTION 4.—The Trade Union Congress and  
Miscellaneous—Exhibits and Final Plea  
Paras: 142-149**

**142. The T.U.C. and its early political ideals—the Second  
International's efforts to capture the T.U.C. and the  
Cawnpore Session of 1927—Exts. P. 545(8), P. 545(6)—  
P.Ws. 111 and 119**

The existence of the Trade Union Congress as a separate organisation of the working-class was justified and necessary. It was moreover increasingly becoming clear that the workers had to find the expression of their political emancipation not through the National Congress, but through the T.U.C. and a political party of their own.

The Trade Union Congress, even before the advent of the Communists, was expressing itself on political questions, but the political ideals so expressed were not anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist. The lead that the working-class was being given can be best found in the Presidential Addresses of the congresses. After the non-co-operation days when the bourgeoisie embarked on the career of co-operating with the British Dictatorship, the talk of leading the workers into a fight for Swaraj (Dass's Address of 1922) vanished. The President of the 1925 Bombay Session, Mr. Thengdi in his address said: "The work of the Indian National Congress is mainly political while ours is mainly economic". [Ex. D 145(18)]. And further on, "to get things done through the Government and by law is a sure, though slow, remedy for all your ills". The lead given by the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. Bole was thoroughly reactionary. He called the Versailles Treaty "a Magna Charta of the labouring classes all over the world". However, the Trade Union Congress had begun developing international contacts; it was affiliated to the Workers' Welfare League in August 1924. It had established an office and started the Trade Union Bulletin in July 1924. For the first time, the Presidential Address of 1925, in spite of its extra-loyal attitude, spoke in terms of class and conceived the workers as an independent social category producing social wealth on which Capitalism thrived.

The sixth session of the T.U.C. at Madras on 10th January 1926 was presided over by Mr. V. V. Giri. It was attended by Mr. Graham Pole. The President in his address pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi was against the formation of the Trade Union Congress and four years back Mr. C. F. Andrews, the elected President of the year, had agreed with him but later on came to recognise that "international co-ordination on labour problems was necessary". But the idea of co-ordination of the workers of all countries on a class basis fighting against Capitalism was far from their mind. The Congress by its resolutions asked for the formation of a political party of the workers "on the lines of the Labour Party of England". It also opined that "a measure framed by Indians conferring on India Swaraj or Self-Government based on adult suffrage be passed into law, without delay". But like its petty lawyer leadership the Congress while demanding Swaraj was asking for seats on the Legislature in terms of the recommendations of the Muddiman Report!

However, the T.U.C. was not quite that innocent body of workers, whom Capitalism would like to confine to purely welfare schemes and wages questions, to the purely economic demands. It was already asking for political freedom, for which the rank and file fought alongside the nationalist movement in the days of direct action. But the political demands were to be realised through the Imperialist State and were consistent with the existence of foreign dictatorship. It is alleged against us in this case that we worked our revolutionary conspiracy through the T.U.C. inasmuch as those harmless ideals of the T.U.C. were changed into those asking for a Soviet Republican model and urging the workers to revolutionary action. The evidence here regarding our T.U.C. work begins with the Delhi Session of March 1927. A reference to the report shows that the Congress was attended by Saklatwala and was held at Delhi at his request. The call for general strike found in some of our Trade Union resolutions is said to be a special Communist tactic. But the report submitted then by the General Secretary, Mr. Ginwalla, shows that the Trade Union Congress had actively helped the General Strike in England of May 1926 and had sent Rs. 8,306/- to the



British T.U.C. for helping the General Strike. Out of the 47 resolutions passed none touched the fundamental aims and objects of the T.U.C. and on the question of international affiliation, the Congress approved the efforts at that time made by the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee for unity between the I.F.T.U. the yellow organisation and the R.I.L.U., supporting affiliation to which is considered to be one of the ingredients of our "crime". Saklatwala came and went. The Delhi Session congratulated him, elected S. V. Ghate as Assistant Secretary and D. R. Thengdi as Administrative Secretary, and thereby shook British Imperialism so violently that all the three incidents have been brought into this case as evidence. But these three incidents did not shake the T.U.C. from its old constitutional politics!

The large mass of evidence brought here regarding the Trade Union Congress relates to the Cawnpore and Jharia Session of 1927 November and 1928 December, and the E.C. Meeting of February 1928 at Delhi. The evidence against me individually relates only to the Cawnpore session and the Delhi Meeting of the E.C. to T.U.C. The reason for concentrating on these particular years and sessions lies in the fact that with the year 1927 began a period of industrial and political upheaval, which during the next four years continued to gather in volume and intensity. British Imperialism had decided on an iron hand policy and kicked at the Indian bourgeoisie through the Simon Commission. The Labour Party and the Second International gang had also a hand in it. When the offensive on the political front began, the labour imperialists naturally feared that the Indian working-class, as in 1921-22, would join with and strengthen the hands of the nationalist bourgeoisie, if it decided to give battle. Therefore, the workers' organisations had to be won over to the influence of the policy of Geneva, the British Labour Party, British T.U.C., the I.F.T.U., the Second International, all of which have one and the same policy towards India—that it must remain a slave of Imperialism. Though the I.F.T.U. was outwardly carrying on talks of unity with the R.I.L.U., it had no intension of bringing it about. Therefore, at its Paris Congress it decided to make efforts to secure affiliation of the colonial workers' organisations. A big bunch of

labour imperialists, trade unionists and socialists of all kinds suddenly took fancy to study the Indian conditions and came to India. Amongst them were Messrs. Purcell and Hallsworth. The Cawnpore Session of the T.U.C. and the Delhi Meeting of the E.C. of T.U.C. was one continuous attempt of these men to get the A.I.T.U.C. affiliated to the I.F.T.U. and to tone down or sabotage the workers' taking part in the anti-imperialist front that was developing on the Simon Commission Boycott. The Cawnpore Session and the Delhi Meeting, contrary to the allegations of the Prosecution, do not record a single attempt to bid for power by the Communist and Left-Wing trade unionists, but was an organised offensive of the Second International, the British Labour Imperialists and the I.F.T.U. to prevent the working-class in India, not from joining the R.I.L.U. or the Comintern only, but from joining the movement of political emancipation and taking the leadership of the anti-Imperialist front. My article published in the "Herald" of Bombay entitled "The Conspiracy of Imperialism in the All-India Trade Union Congress" [of which Ex. P. 545(8) seems to be a copy], explained this very point of view. But that article did not suggest or propose affiliation to the R.I.L.U. or any other body. At the Cawnpore Session a number of leaflets, were distributed on this very subject and the Prosecution have exhibited some copies of them which the police got hold of there [Exs. P. 545(6)]. These leaflets also warned the Congress against the attempts being made by the yellow internationalists, but did not propose any affiliation. They again insisted on the unity between the two Trade Union Internationals, that is reiterated the resolution of the Delhi Congress on the subject. The Congress in spite of the attempts of Purcell reaffirmed its Delhi resolution on the subject of international affiliation, and also decided upon the boycott of the Simon Commission.

Prosecution witnesses No. 111 and 119 have been brought to prove that I was present at the Cawnpore Session. I certainly do not deny the fact that I was there and that I was elected one of the Secretaries for the ensuing year; but I am not in a position to corroborate their other statements as to what I spoke on which resolution. P.W. 119 says that I moved the resolution congratulating

the U.S.S.R. on its Tenth Anniversary. There were worldwide demonstrations and congratulations from all proletarian quarters on the 10th Anniversary Celebration and the Trade Union Congress of the Indian workers certainly could not have kept itself from congratulating the Workers' Republic and neither can a real trade unionist be expected not to move or support such a resolution. I cannot, however, vouchsafe for the correctness of the P.W.'s Report.

Ex. P. 1878 C dated 5.12.27 is said to be a report sent by me to all those comrades in the "conspiracy" who had agreed upon a revolutionary policy to be followed at Cawnpore in the T.U.C. The body of the report itself does not warrant any such conclusion. It is addressed to the members of the "T.U.C. Left", that is those, who did not agree with the policy of the Geneva School and had expressed a desire in the Congress to follow a more radical policy. The report itself says that those who agreed on this point decided to form "a cohesive group and a plan for future work in order to foster *real trade union activity amongst* the workers". To attack the numbers of this "Left" with the charge of "conspiracy" is to attack the aim of real trade union activity and nothing else.

The nationalist bourgeoisie, unable to agree upon the constitution that it should have, but intent upon hiding its internal contradictions behind the mask of an All-Parties Unity in the face of Imperialist attack, was trying all sorts of antics of "producing a constitution" of free India before it had even fired a single shot for freedom. There was a veritable epidemic of constitutions and endless waste of paper over the phrases about the advantages of a Federal State or a Unitary State, about defence and debts and so on. The bourgeoisie is going through these travails for the last four years and nothing is yet born. They smack their lips over the igneous copies they make of this or that country's constitution with improvements "to suit the genius of India" and like the idiotic merchant, who copied the ledger of his rich rival and imagined that being in possession of this copy he had also come into possession of the coveted wealth, they begin to assume the airs of "free men" and the manners of "ambassadors". While in

fact for their pocket expense of 25 shillings a day at the "ambassadorial" Round Table Conference, they have to run to the steward of the St. James'. This mediocre bourgeoisie wanted to engage the T.U.C. also in this foolery. The T.U.C. leadership dominated as it was by the kindred spirits of the bourgeoisie, agreed to join in and appointed a sub-Committee to draft a "Labour constitution for the future Government of India". The Committee consisted of Messrs. Chaman Lal (President of the Congress), N. M. Joshi (General Secretary), M. Daud, G. Sethi, K. Ghosh, D. R. Thengdi, Jhabwala, Dange and Spratt. Out of these nine, the last five are accused in this case. Spratt was appointed convener. But the Committee never met nor did it frame any constitution.

**143. The Delhi E.C.T.U.C. Meeting—Jharia Congress—the T.U.C. must not co-operate with the surrenders of the I.N.C.**

Though the game of the Second Internationalists was foiled in Cawnpore, they did not give it up. An official invitation was procured in the meanwhile from the I.F.T.U. to the T.U.C. for affiliation to it. A meeting of the Executive Committee was arranged at Delhi in February 1928, and contrary to all constitutional procedure, though the full session of the Congress had not decided on any affiliation, the E.C. was being asked to decide on this vital matter without any consultation with the affiliated unions. The Genevites in power knew full well that they would have a majority at the E.C. meeting. When the meeting was held in one of the Committee Rooms of the Assembly Chamber, Messrs. Purcell and Hallsworth recommended affiliation to the I.F.T.U. A proposal was also brought forward to break off connections with the Workers' Welfare League, which was the representative in England of the T.U.C. since 1924. What does this show? It means that it was the yellow internationalists who were taking the offensive. It was they who were committing the Congress to international affiliation and that with the I.F.T.U. They were moving for disaffiliation from W.W.L. Our reply to this was naturally to prevent it, since the I.F.T.U. was only an

agent of Imperialism inside the working-class movement, an agency that was dominated by the British Unions and the politics of the Labour Party. In spite of this there was no proposal at this E.C. meeting from us for affiliation with the R.I.L.U. and as regards the W.W.L. we were merely asking for the status quo. The W.P.P. circular to trade unions issued on this matter [Ex. P. 545(7)] does not positively demand affiliation but says, "if any affiliation is considered it should be in favour of the R.I.L.U.". The result was that there was no affiliation to any international, though the official bureaucracy succeeded in disaffiliating the T.U.C. from the W.W.L. and appointing the British T.U.C. as the agent of the Indian T.U.C.

Thus whether at Delhi, March 1927, at Cawnpore, November 1927, or at Delhi, February 1928, there were no proposals from the Left section of the T.U.C. or the Communist trade unionists fundamentally altering either the aims and objects or the trade union activities, undertaken by the Congress. All the proposals were *preventives* keeping the T.U.C. from going under the domination of the International of Labour Imperialists. And though a few officials of the T.U.C. were from the Left Group, the majority control remained in the hands of the Geneva School.

The year 1928 was a year of the offensive of Imperialism against the nationalist bourgeois movement which was gathering volume on the Simon Commission question and also a year of the offensive of the Indian bourgeoisie against the Indian workers. The longest and biggest strikes took place in this year and naturally shook the ideology of the workers. But the Trade Union Congress as such gave little lead, because it was still in that stage in which the National Congress was before the war period. The political atmosphere was in a ferment when the T.U.C. met at Jharia in December 1928 under the Presidentship of M. Daud. As the report shows [D 145(34)], the Presidential Address (D 305) gave no lead to the workers to meet the situation confronting them and the country as a whole, and the Chairman of the Reception Committee was thankful to the workers and employers for working "in a spirit of amity and good feeling". The President, M. Daud, expressed himself against Complete Independence and

wanted Dominion Status with "safeguards for labour". In spite of such a reactionary lead, which relegated the toilers, the majority of the nation, to a secondary place in the affairs of the country and patronised them with "safeguards", the Government attacked the Trade Union Congress by arresting Johnstone in the midst of the Congress, because he represented the League Against Imperialism, and deported him. This one offensive act of the Imperialist Dictatorship undermined the strength of its support from the Geneva School. The T.U.C. was affiliated for a period of one year to the League Against Imperialism as a protest against Johnstone's arrest. But from this it would be erroneous to conclude that the Left Trade Unionists dominated the Congress. The Jharia Session, as can be seen from the resolutions, represents a peculiar balancing of the Right and Left. There was no change in the fundamental aims and objects of the T.U.C. But the Congress formulated "a basis for the future constitution of India to be placed before the All Parties Convention" that was held at Calcutta on 22nd December 1928. The Congress unequivocally declared for the "(1) Socialist Republican Government of the working-classes, (2) Abolition of the Indian States and Socialistic Republican Government in those places, (3) Nationalisation of Industries and Land." This basis was to be presented to the Convention by a Committee, and Mr. R. R. Bakhale, the Deputy Leader of the Right Group. The Congress affiliated to the League Against Imperialism that stands for complete independence for the colonies, but did not refuse to send representatives to Geneva, which is opposed to such independence! The Congress rescinded the resolution of the Delhi E.C. Meeting and withdrew its representation given to the British T.U.C., but did not restore its agency of the Workers' Welfare League. It decided not to have any agent at all. Thus after eight years of existence the Congress had defined the political form of the State it would like to have in India. But it was not adopted as its ideal but as a proposal to be put before the All Parties Convention, a tool invented by the Indian bourgeoisie to sabotage the Simon boycott by the diplomatic back-door.

This delicate balancing of the Right and Left thoroughly went in favour of the Left at Nagpur in 1929. And the gentlemen of the

Right instead of taking the defeat in a democratic spirit seceded from the Congress and formed a separate organisation, which was nothing but a well-dressed carcass put in a glass case and labelled "Geneva Dolls on Annual Show", roaming in the labour—imperialist markets of Europe at Government expense.

When the Trade Union Congress, in response to the growing political tension around, was thus advancing in its political ideals, the National Congress did not revise its attitude towards the organisation of workers. After Gauhati, took place the Madras and Calcutta congresses of 1927 and 1928. The A.I.C.C. and All Parties Convention had asked the T.U.C. to take part in the show of framing the constitution. But there was no attempt made to dig the forgotten resolution of 1924-25 to undertake organisation of workers. Till 1929 even the advanced petty-bourgeois section did not approach the T.U.C. until Pt. Jawahar Lal's socialist shadow brought him to the Presidentship, followed by the nationalist fascist shadow of Subash Bose, who, quite in exact limitation of his master, C. R. Dass, came to the T.U.C. only in order to procure some sort of stick to win his losing position in the nationalist Congress circles. Once in a while the Working Committee was asked to help the Golmuri Tin Plate Workers' Strike and it left the matter to its Secretary. The G.I.P. Railway workers struck on 3rd February 1930, just when the National Congress was preparing its ultimatum of non-co-operation with the British Dictatorship after its conciliation offer to the Viceroy before the Lahore Congress, was rejected. But the Working Committee in its meeting in the second week of February, when the Government forces were beating down the workers with armed force, which soon was to be employed against the Congress also, recommended to the workers co-operation with the same Dictatorship and said: "The Committee trusts that a *Conciliation Board* will be appointed....." Except for this little piece of remembrance (which was occasioned by the fact that the strike thrust itself upon their attention as the railways affected the movements of their leaders) the Congress remained oblivious of the workers' organisations.

It has always happened in history that when the petty-bourgeois is beaten, he runs to the workers for aid. It happened in India after the defeat of 1921-22. It was bound to repeat and did repeat in

1931. The Congress signed the Delhi Pact but was not sure that it would be observed by the Dictatorship. The upper section petty-bourgeoisie was becoming lukewarm and the Congress wanted some pawn to move. It also was afraid that the workers and peasants would march over the heads of the Congress and take to direct action to protect their interests. So it again remembered the existence of workers and indulged in the inexpensive pleasure of passing a resolution on Fundamental Rights at Karachi. Dass remembered the workers at Gaya *after* the debacle of Bardoli, Jawahar Lal & Co. remembered the workers at Karachi *after* the debacle of Delhi. It is always after and never before. Because, if they call in the workers and the poor peasants in the real thick of the fight, they are afraid of the revolutionary national and class-struggle that might ensue from their participation. It is done after, because then they are wanted either as a pawn to threaten Imperialism with, or to placate and quieten the rising forces into the ignominious compromises that are made. One leader, while speaking on the resolution of Fundamental Rights in the A.I.C.C., said in plain terms, "if as some of them apprehended, the negotiations with the present British Government failed, the masses would have to come once again to *their* rescue and fight the battle. It was *therefore* necessary that the masses should know exactly what was meant by Swaraj of which the Congress spoke". This is plain enough to show that the workers' unions and organisation, have no reason to be jubilant over the Fundamental Rights Resolution. The Trade Union Congress need not flirt with the National Congress with proposals of conferring this right and that right upon the workers. It is the business of the Trade Union Congress to take the leadership in the workers' struggle and not to beg of the bourgeoisie, however radical it may be, for a place in the constitution. Democracy for the workers is not conferred, it has to be won. The Nationalist bourgeoisie has for the last eleven years systematically ignored, neglected, despised or sabotaged the workers' organisation—the Trade Union Congress. Why should we go and seek co-operation with it and that in its surrenders, when we have the capacity and forces to win freedom ourselves?



The Court has asked me to explain a reference regarding Jharia Congress by P.W. No. 123. I was not present at the Jharia Session of the T.U.C. neither does the Prosecution say that I was. I cannot explain the reference. But it is a fact that I was elected one of the Secretaries of the T.U.C. and was so till my arrest. I was informed of my election by the General Secretary, Mr. N.M. Joshi.

From the evidence presented here about the developments in the Trade Union Congress since 1926, only one conclusion can be drawn, that the political ideals and demands of the working-class were becoming clearer and finding their expression in the resolutions of the Congress, and the growth of the influence of Geneva and the Second International attended by co-operation with Imperialism and Capitalism was being prevented. The Congress was far from attempts, whether by Left or any other group, at forcing it into revolutionary action to overthrow the Government. The charges in this case cannot be substantiated by the evidence.

#### **144. The W.P.P. and C.P.I. Exhibits**

However, well-organised and well-directed the Trade Union Congress may be, it cannot take the place of political party for the working-class. All the workers in an industry or a majority of them can join the trade unions and take part in their work. But every class in the growth of its movement has to produce an advanced section, a rank and file leadership, that has to cultivate a broader outlook, a larger perspective beyond the industrial class-struggle in which the unions are generally engaged. This essence of the broad masses has to be organised into a political party, because ultimately the working-class and peasantry have to establish their own class state. The workers in India have to take the leadership in the national struggle and for that they must have an independent political class party of their own. The Workers' and Peasants' Party was organised with this view, and during its two-years work, it tried by propaganda only to give the correct class ideology to the workers and clarify their political and economic needs and aims. The W.P.P. did not go beyond this, as can be seen from the evidence tendered here.

I began to take part in the activities of the W.P.P. from March 1928, when the Party threw itself whole-heartedly in the struggle of the Bombay workers against the offensive of Capitalism. The Textile Strike of the Bombay workers required a newspaper. Mainly with this view was the *Kranti* started from 30th June 1928 by the Party, and as a member of the W.P.P. I edited and managed the paper till my arrest. During this period the paper was more than self-supporting and if am allowed to bring evidence, I can show from the accounts that the theory of the Prosecution that the *Kranti* was financed by grants from outside is completely baseless.

A number of exhibits referring to the W.P.P. conference in December 1928 in Calcutta have been put to me. P.W. No. 254 R.B. Trivedi who deposes about the Conference proceedings does not mention my presence there and I think the Prosecution also do not maintain that I was at Calcutta. I did not attend the Calcutta Conference and am not in a position to say anything about it.

There are some exhibits put to me and classified as C.P.I. documents. I have already stated my views on the C.P.I. question Now as for the documents.

Ex. 1207 (1) Printed Report of C.P.I. Conference of 31st May 1927. I was not present at this Conference. I can prove that I was not in Bombay at this time (31st May 1927). Ex. P. 1285: Letter accepting membership of the Presidium of the C.P.I. dated 18th December 1927. This is put in to make the reference in P. 1207 (1) consistent with the Madras Papers that follow this. But the Prosecution in trying to make it consistent forgot to do the essential thing. Somehow they put to me references of a place or proceeding where I was not present. The same thing has happened with the Madras Meeting of the E.C. of C.P.I. The Prosecution say that there was such a meeting and that I presided over it (Exs. P. 1287 (2) (3) etc. etc.). They had sent their clever man P.W.No 244 Rao S. Patwardhan to see what the "Bombay people" did at Madras. But he nowhere mentions my presence in Madras. The fact is that I had not been to Madras at all. Similar is the case with what are called the Calcutta Meeting references (Ex. P. 1295.) I had not gone to Calcutta and cannot say what happened there.

The same can be said about P. 1296 and P. 1297, about Bombay Meetings of 17th and 19th March 1929. I am said to have been Chairman on the 17th but not present on 19th. In the "Madras Papers" care has been taken to put down the initials of the Chairman on the proceedings. But here everything is omitted. And if you read these papers with the previous reference the conclusions will be a bit funny. There is a conference in Bombay in May 1927, one in Madras in December, 1927, a meeting of the E.C. in Calcutta in December 1928—a blank of full one year between. There is a constitution and rules which the Prosecution have not failed to print as many times as possible and still you find, only two months after Calcutta, the Prosecution unearthing a paper which starts over again framing the rules and discussing the organisation of the C.P.I. ! A very crudely arranged business—this evidence collection or creation, whichever you may like to call it.

#### **145. Exhibit Letters**

##### **Letters, Group I—From one party to another**

In the exhibits put to me there are a large number of letters, which are not written by me nor sent to me. Many of them are photographs or copies purporting to be taken from the originals. Some of them are deposed by the police witnesses to have been intercepted by them in the post office. These are as follows:

##### **LETTERS**

Third Party Letters (that is letters neither addressed to me nor sent by me.) Exhs. P.

- 76—S.N. Tagore, Berlin, to K. Ghosh
- 526 (2)—Bradley to Potter Wilson 14.1.29
- 526 (6)—P.C. Joshi to Spratt
- 526 (24)—Majid to Spratt
- 835—Mirajkar to Thengdi 29.1.28
- 840—Joglekar to Thengdi
- 983—Ghosh to Bradley (Rejected by Prosecution)
- 1009—Code Letter 4.9.27

## 1322 *Documents of The Communist Movement in India*

- 1140—Muzaffar Ahmad to Joglekar
- 1141—Muzaffar Ahmad to Joglekar
- 1323—Muzaffar to Ghate 2.8.28
- 1348 (22)—Muzaffar to Ghate 20.5.28
- 1348 (34)—C.P. Dutt to Ghate 28.6.28
- 1348 (35)—Muzaffar to Ghate 30.11.28
- 1373 (5)—Muzaffar to Ghate
- 1633—V. Chattopadhyaya to Jhabwala 16.5.28
- 1636—P.P.T.U.S. to Jhabwala
- 1654 P—Muzaffar to Ghate
- 1848 C—Muzaffar to Ghate
- 1869 C—Arthur Field to Joglekar 27.11.24
- 1968—Spratt to Robin 21.7.27
- 2038 P—S.N. Tagore to Muzaffar 21.11.28
- 2051 C—Sohan Singh to Muzaffar •
- 2055 C—Spratt to Muzaffar
- 2057— . . . to W.P.P. Bengal
- 2065 (M)—Spratt to Muzaffar
- 2067 P—Spratt to Joglekar
- 2211—V. Chattopadhyaya to Jhabwala
- 2328 P2—Des to Douglas 14.6.27
- 2408 P—Ghate to Dutt
- 2409 P—P.C. Joshi to R.P. Dutt 5.11.28
- 2412 P2—B.F. Bradley to Potter Wilson 27.11.28
- 2413 P2—B.F. Bradley to Potter Wilson
- 2419—Spratt to Robin

Total 34

As these letters were not written by me nor were they within my knowledge, I cannot say anything about them.

### **Letters, Group II—From some party to me but not allowed to reach me**

Another class of letters is of those that seem to have been addressed to me. The Prosecution say that they were intercepted by the police in the post office. Some of these were altogether

withheld by them. Some were photographed or copied by hand and typewriter. The exhibits here are these "originals " or Copies.

Exh:	P 1602 (P)	from S.V. Ghaté 20.8.28
„	P 1605 (C)	from C.P. Dutt undated
„	P 1607 (C)	from C.P. Dutt undated
„	P 1608 (C)	from S.S. Josh 14.7.28
„	P 1609 (O)	from Bob Lovell 2.8.28
„	P 1610 (P)	from Chatto 18.9.28
„	P 1611 (P)	from Muzaffar Ahmad 5.11.28
„	P 1612 (P)	from Muzaffar Ahmad 1.3.29
„	P 1613 (C)	from Muzaffar Ahmad 16.1.28
„	P 1614 (C)	from Muzaffar Ahmad 11.2.28
„	P 1615 (C)	from Muzaffar Ahmad 2.3.28
„	P 1617 (C)	from Muzaffar Ahmad 7.8.28
„	P 1619 (P)	from P.C. Joshi
„	P 1621 (P)	from P.C. Joshi 6.3.28
„	P 1624 (C)	from Usmani 2.4.28
„	P 1625 (C)	from Usmani 29.11.28
„	P 1626 (C)	from Majid 27.7.28
„	P 1628 (P)	from Ghosh 3.1.29
„	P 1637 (O)	from S.S. Josh 13.3.28
„	P 1639 (O)	from S.S. Josh 4.7.28
„	P 1641 (C)	from S.S. Josh 18.8.28
„	P 1665 (O)	from S.S. Josh 14.2.28
„	P 1797 (P)	from Goswami 17.11.28
„	P 1807 (I) (O)	from Glyn Evans 13.12.28
„	P 1819 (O)	from ? Packet of newspapers
„	P 1835 (P)	from J ? 26.11
„	P 1845 (O)	from Dutt 29.3.28
„	P 1863 (P)	from Spratt 18.12.27
„	P 1864 (C)	from Spratt

### **Letters, Group III—Police copies from "my" letters**

In the same category fall the copies which the police say they took in the post office from my letters. There are to such P 1878 (C) and 2141 (C).

Group II and III were born, bred and developed between the post and police. The Prosecution have to expert witnesses, one from Calcutta and the other photographer from London who are prepared to own any copy or photograph as their own, no matter where they have originated. So the post, police and Prosecution are at liberty to do anything with these papers. I have nothing to do with them.

**Letters, Group IV—From some party to me, found in searches in "Originals"**

P 819 from Thengdi	(In Thengdi's office)
P 955 from Muzaffar Ahmad	(In G.K.U. office)
P 957 from Usmani	(In G.K.U. office)
P 973 from Alve	(In Dange's office)
P 995 from Usmani	(In Dange's office)
P 996 from Usmani	(In Dange's office)
P 1967 from Spratt	(In Spratt's office)

The persons from whom they purport to come should be referred to.

**Letters, Group V—From "me" to some party in "Original"**

P 395 (1) (2)	To Muzaffar
P 396	To Muzaffar Telegram
P 997	Postal receipts of book parcels
P 1299	To Ghate 8.4.28
P 1965	To Spratt 5.7.27
P 1966	To Spratt 8.7.27
P 1972	To Spratt 20.5.27
P 1973	To Spratt 24.6.27

As regards this group of letters it may be said by the Prosecution that a man can recognise his own handwriting and say whether he wrote the particular letters or not (though such a point cannot be urged in the case of very clever forgeries of signatures or identical handwritings of two different persons). But in my reply in relation to such items, I have to point out my previous experience and the way in which the Courts use the law

against the accused. In the Cawnpore Case, in which I was an accused, I was asked similar questions about letters sent to me and by me. Not having had any previous experience of bourgeois law, I straightway acknowledged those which I had received or written and denied those that I had not. The Prosecution seized that statement and argued that I had proved the handwriting of those whose letters, I acknowledged to have received and admitted my offence regarding my own letters. And as for those that I had really not received at all, they said that I was not telling the truth. The Court agreed, and said that I told the "truth" where I admitted the letters and told a "falsehood" where I denied them. The Assessors in the case, who were common citizens not knowing this bourgeois law, accepted my plea and declared me not guilty. The Court disagreed with them and brushed their opinion aside and held me guilty. Hence, I consider that it is unfair and illogical to ask an accused person to give evidence against himself and eminent jurists agree with this view. When such is the vice in which the liberty and principles of a person and Party are held, it is useless to answer the question.

**146. Refusal of the Court here and at Cawnpore, and the District Magistrate to permit me to obtain information on the "Foreign exhibits" when I was taken as a Defence witness in the Roy Case**

There are some documents in the case, which are alleged to have originated from a "Foreign Bureau" on the Continent of Europe, which, the Magistrate says, was acting under instructions of the Comintern. The Bureau had three members of whom M.N. Roy was one, and the Prosecution have put down Roy in their list of "63 co-conspirators". There are also about 40 exhibits which are claimed by the Prosecution to be in the handwriting of Roy. When the Prosecution arranged to bring witnesses from England, some of the accused applied to this Court as well as to Government to summon some of those in the co-conspirators' list and give those who were under ban, a guarantee of safe ingress and egress. The Government refused saying that we could

ourselves call anyone we liked but the Government would not grant them immunity from arrest. Now one of the "co-conspirators" in this case, Roy, was found in India, arrested (21.7.31) and brought to trial as an accused in the old Cawnpore Conspiracy Case of 1924, in which three of us here were tried. In the Cawnpore Case I was the only one, who made a statement before the Magistrate, in which I stated that I was a Socialist, and as the editor of the "Socialist" (my weekly newspaper 1922-1924), I had to keep correspondence with many persons and amongst them with Roy. The Court used this statement, which, I now know, was not as it should have been in certain parts for a Socialist-Communist, against me and Roy. In order to explain what I meant by this statement, I was particularly required by the defence in the present Roy prosecution, to appear as a witness. I was summoned by the Addl. Sessions Judge Cawnpore through this Court to appear on the 10th December, 1931. As soon as I received the summons I put in two applications before this Court, one on 7th and another on 8th December. In one application, I requested for permission to see two persons in Cawnpore (Messrs. G.G. Jog and H.N. Shastri), whom I wanted to summon as Defence witnesses, with reference to Exts: P. 1381, P. 10, P. 243, P. 1965, P. 1966 etc. A copy of the application was sent to the District Magistrate here. The D.M. asked me to apply to the D.M. at Cawnpore, who was not expected to know whether really there were any such exhibits here or not. So I asked this Court to give me a certificate saying that the two persons could give some relevant evidence, as stated in my petition. The certificate was given. But almost a similar request on the most important exhibits was refused. The second application asked for permission to interview Roy in order to secure information from him especially with regard to the famous "Assembly Letter" published by Government on the eve of the Public Safety Bill and which is an exhibit here [Exh. P. 377 (1)] and which Roy had announced in the press, was a forgery. I requested the Court to send in charge of its officer some of the exhibits in the case ascribed to Roy. The Court refused to do it saying that it had no power to send the exhibits or to grant me permission to interview Roy on the matter. My application was



referred to the District Magistrate here, who passed an order on the 10th December that he was not prepared to send the exhibits "except on the order of a Court".

As regards consultation, the Magistrate said: "I agree with the learned Sessions Judge (i.e. this Court) that this is a matter for the orders by the Sessions Judge of Cawnpore". This Court referred me to the D.M. who referred me to the Judge at Cawnpore. Well when I was taken there under police guard, I applied to the Judge mentioning there above two references. The most learned Judge referred me to the jail authorities! And the jail authorities refused saying they had no powers! Thus all judicial learning combined to frustrate my attempts to get correct information on the exhibits in the "foreign section" from available sources. Yet this Court, the D.M. here and the Sessions Judge at Cawnpore observed a very obliging brotherhood towards each when the Prosecution at Cawnpore wanted certain documents from the records of this Court. This Court and the D.M., both of whom refused me the defence facility, readily sent Exhibits P. 2477 and P. 2478 in this case with Mr. Gaya Prasad, who is appointed in charge of the exhibits by this Court and who is at the same time Prosecution witness number 272. He deposed there (in the Roy case): "The writings encircled in blue pencil in P. 2477 and 2478 were written by S. A. Dange, an accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. They were written in my presence. Dange has been previously convicted in 1924. He is the same Dange. These exhibits from part of the Meerut Case and I want to get them back and I leave a copy." In cross-examination he stated: "I had the photographs made at Cawnpore. I was asked to produce them to the C.I.D. photographer, who photographed them." Thus the records in charge of this Court have been travelling from C.I.D. to C.I.D. but when I asked for a few exhibits being taken to Cawnpore, everybody pointed to somebody else and nobody said he had power to permit it.

After returning from Cawnpore, I applied through this Court for a copy of Roy's statement before the Addl. Sessions Judge Cawnpore, on 12th December 1931, thinking that it might contain a cross-reference to exhibits in this case. The copy was refused by

the Judge in his order of date 21.12.31 delivered to me by this Court. The order again reveals the profound learning of the learned Judge at Cawnpore, Mr. A. Hamilton, and shows the way his victim will be treated. He says: "The charge in the case before me referred to the years 1921 to 1924 and the applicant was tried and convicted for conspiracy in those years, so only what refers to subsequent years can help him, and nothing was said about subsequent years. I reject the application." The learned Judge is so profoundly immersed in his learning that he forgot that the case before him may refer to the years 1921 to 1924 but only three weeks before he wrote the above order he himself had admitted evidence referring to the year 1930 and supplied by this Court from this case. Now I can grant that two learned Judges sitting five hundred miles apart can know what evidence is required to help each other, so that their preys may not escape, but I did not think that Mr. Hamilton at Cawnpore would claim to possess an intensive knowledge of the exhibits in this case, and give his opinion as to what would be useful to me here and whether it must necessarily refer to the "subsequent years", as he says. Because the case here, as in Cawnpore, begins—if it can be said to have a beginning at all—with the Russian Revolution and the Comintern. Here are exhibits exactly referring to the period and incidents that have reference in the Cawnpore Case evidence also. Only to take the instance of evidence individually referring to me, there is the mention of my book, "Gandhi Vs. Lenin", Exh: P. 507, here and referred to in the deposition of Col. C. Kaye in the Cawnpore Case and Mr. Hamilton could have seen it at page 25 of the proceedings of the case printed for the High Court. Similarly here are in exhibits the two books of Roy "India in Transition" and "India's Problem and its Solution" Exh. No. P. 759 and P. 296 here and Ex. B and C in the Cawnpore Case. (Page 22 Printed proceedings). Is not the learned Mr. Hamilton a bit too much learned when he tells me what is and is not in this case or the one he is trying? It is no wonder that with such learning he condemned the Kakori accused seven years back and has oppressed and gagged Roy from saying anything in his defence and did not allow me to see him, in spite of the fact that such an

interview would not have resulted in another "worldwide conspiracy" as I do not agree with Roy in his differences with the Comintern.

**147. Exhs: P. 507 "Gandhi Vs. Lenin" Four meetings—Exh. P. 2512**

Exh: P. 507, a book "Gandhi Vs. Lenin" has been put to my account. This book was written by me in March 1921, when in obedience to the call of the Indian National Congress I left my college and joined the students' non-co-operation movement. Though I joined non-co-operation, I was not in thorough agreement with the Gandhian programme. In this book I have compared Gandhism and Leninism and have shown preference in favour of latter. In spite of this I have to say that the book is not a Leninist work at all. No Marxist literature was available at that time. In the book I have confounded the viewpoint of ordinary economic determinism with the Historical Materialism of Marx, and have in many places even shown leaning towards Idealist philosophy, which has no place in Marxist Materialism. I would not subscribe to that book today and it is of no use now in the service of Communism, though in those days, I think, it was the first of its kind to appear in India, and break through the web of lies that were being circulated about the Russian Revolution and Lenin, by the imperialist bourgeois press.

Exh: P. 1684, put to me, is a report by P. W. 262 of a meeting held on 14th September 1927 to welcome Usmani on his release from jail. Usmani was my co-accused in the Cawnpore Case. As such and as a man, who had come out of the torture of jail life unbroken in our common principles, I was bound to welcome him. But the report of the speech made by the P. W. is incorrect. The report says that I spoke about refusal of passport to me to go out of India. Nowhere throughout the evidence is it alleged that I ever applied for passport and that it was refused. The report is obviously a fabrication.

P. 1685—Report of a meeting by P. W. 262 held to celebrate the Anniversary of the Russian Revolution on 7th November 1927 in Bombay. Those who wish for freedom whether from Imperialism

or Capitalism are bound to rejoice at the growth of the Soviet Republic and so did we. I cannot say that the report of the speech is correct.

Exh: P. 2311—meeting held to protest against the judicial murder of Sacco-Vanzetti by American Imperialism. The oppressed classes in every country must show international solidarity with the victims of Capitalist Imperialism. If the Indian workers and peasants want freedom, and help from all the countries in their struggle, they cannot get it by sending appeals to the "World Powers" of Imperialism but by themselves rendering help to the workers and peasants of other countries. In 1927, we simply protested against Sacco-Vanzetti's fate. They were seven years in prison, undergoing the farce of a trial under American Imperialism. We, who protested against this, shall be soon doing four years under British Imperialism, undergoing a similar farce. The whole world protested for Sacco and Vanzetti and I am glad that we could join our small frail voice in that mighty protest.

The report of my speech is incorrect.

Exh: P. 2512—This exhibit has a history and has caused a lot of trouble. It is alleged that this bunch of papers is in my hand, that it was written somewhere in January 1930, either in jail or police custody, and that it was found in the personal search of one V.H. Joshi near the docks in Bombay. It is inferred that it is a repetition of offence on my part and it has been used as a ground for refusal of bail to me.

In reply, I have to repeat what I have said before this Court, when I argued my bail application on April 1931. I said that if I am to lead evidence to show where, how and who composed or produced this exhibit I must be released on bail; since this evidence particularly cannot be led unless I am freed on bail from that jail and police custody, where the exhibit is alleged to have originated. But the Court refused to take note of this and grant the bail. This document has been given unnecessary weight, only to hit at me in anyway possible. It looks like a few jottings or notes made by a person, who has watched the movement in the country,

has followed the evidence and proceedings of this case, is interested in it and has made some remarks about the whole thing. Even a stray note on any incident in the evidence by your Honour can be procured and put into exhibit as a "document shedding light on the conspiracy," but that would not mean that it corroborates the evidence in anyway. This document in noway strengthens or weakens the Prosecution Case than what it already is by the evidence or the statements made or the evidence. To call such scraps of papers, which, from their very form, purport to be stray notes or observations on economics, politics, "the Meerut Case" etc., a corroborative piece of evidence, and to believe it to be so is utterly wrong. For the Prosecution, with 3000 documents and the backing of their own law, to do such a thing is clumsy, unwarranted and unnecessary. And for any other person who has not come to the level of the police prosecution, to believe it or use it against me or anyone else would be called a piece of political knavery or foolery or personal vendetta. That is all. The document is not mine.

Exh: P. 1690—Report of the Lenin Day meeting, held in Bombay on 21st January 1929, P.W. 180 (Mankar). I have already stated that the working-class, in order to free themselves from slavery and to evolve a higher culture, must give up attachment to the bourgeois and feudal heroes who in their own time have done some good to the cause of the people, but the perpetuation of whose outlook is now no longer good for them. The workers and peasants must now create new heroes, and a new type of "Days" and demonstrations in their honour. Such an evolution will free them from those degenerating communal clashes and wanton murders in which the people in India are involved by imperialist agents. One of such Days is the Lenin Day.

The Prosecution as well as the Committing Magistrate have relied very much on my speech at this meeting, and want to illustrate my views on the question of violence and non-violence by reference to this speech. Because, altogether in the whole evidence, they could put seven meetings and speeches against me. Of them, I have shown how three, the strike speeches, are utterly

unreliable. Of the remaining four, there is no report of any shorthand reporter with regard to three speeches. They are summary notes of the impressions of a C.I.D. Inspector. The only speech for which the police made arrangements to procure a report from a good shorthand reporter is this Lenin Day speech. Mr. Mankar is a well-known shorthand reporter in Bombay whom the police engaged this time. Now from the reputation of the witness the police were entitled to believe that they would get a correct report. But they misjudged on the essential point. It is not sufficient to know shorthand reporting and the English language only to be a good reporter. The reporter must be able to follow the subject. I think this is recognised on all hands. Now Mr. Mankar may have been a good reporter for nationalist speeches. But he had no practice with Communist speeches, which are very difficult to follow, especially when you deal with theory, for a reporter who has not had practice with the subject. That one factor rendered Mr. Mankar incapable of following correctly my speech. Hence you will find his report disjointed, sometimes even unintelligible. What a mess a reporter makes when he does not know the subject can be seen from one very clear reply of Mankar in cross-examination. He has ascribed a statement to Nimbkar in his speech at this meeting, which even an ordinary man, let alone a Communist, knowing something about Lenin, will never say. He says: "So far as I know, the sentence 'Lenin lived and died for the bourgeoisie and the proletariat' is correctly reported". Who can believe, in face of this, that Mankar's reporting on vital points in the speeches is correct? Later on Mr. Mankar himself admits "In case the hall is badly lighted there is some difficulty in taking notes. The position in which the reporters are sitting also affects the efficiency of reporting. The peoples' Jinnah Hall (i.e. where this meeting took place) is a worthless hall for reporters." Though in P. 1690 he has made no note, in P. 1691 he says: "I made a note that bad sitting and bad lighting made efficiency and accuracy difficult". I do maintain that the report of my speech on the Lenin Day, P. 1690, is very incorrect and materially wrong.

**148. One year and 13 days' delaying tactics of the Prosecution—471 useless exhibits—49 unnecessary witnesses—880 pages wastefully printed**

During the course of delivering the statements the Prosecution have several times raised the objection that what we said was unnecessary, that it was waste of time, paper and money. In one case they suggested to this Court not to print at all a certain portion of the particular statement which they considered superfluous. That the agents of a Government which cannot balance its budgets and has to issue an ordinance every morning, should be so mindful of expenses is very creditable, but only it should have been done in time and in the proper place. Their objection to and complaint against money being spent on the statements is an attempt to make their side of the case available to the judges in a de luxe edition, while our answers to their de luxe falsehoods they want to suppress in uncouth worm-eaten files. The charge of wasting public money on nonsensical printing of records can be proved against the Prosecution with reference to a few facts, which can testify to either corruption or mismanagement in their ranks. As soon as evidence began to be put before the Lower Court, we objected to several documents, books etc. going in as they were irrelevant or unnecessary, but exhibited by the Prosecution simply to deprive us of valuable books or prolong the proceedings of the case. Our objections were all over-ruled. What do we now find in the Sessions Court? The Prosecution have withdrawn, as a result of some sense dawning on them or rejection by this Court, 471 exhibits from the huge rubbish they have put in. In the Lower Court, they poured in trainloads of witnesses 320 in number. The necessity and relevance of all this waste of time and money began to vanish with the change in the outside atmosphere and the Prosecution could manage in this Court without the service of 49 of these 320. Yet they called our list of 136 witnesses for Defence a vexatious list and advised the Magistrate to reject it. Who is then following a vexatious and wasteful policy, the Prosecution who put in 49 unnecessary witnesses or the Defence who called for only 136 witnesses for thirty-one accused? The Prosecution object because 24 accused

have taken 1400 pages for their necessary statements. But how many pages have they wasted in printing unnecessary and useless exhibits? The 471 exhibits which have been withdrawn or rejected cover nearly 570 printed pages. Who is responsible for wasting money over these pages? It may be said that it could not be foreseen that these exhibits were useless or that the counsel in the Lower Court, Mr. James thought them relevant, but the counsel who succeeded him, Mr. Kemp considered them useless. But the story of waste does not end there. The Prosecution have printed many exhibit booklets and papers though several copies of them were available in the searches and it was unnecessary to print them at all. Not only have they printed them but done it more than once. For example exhibit P. 523 "Call to Action" and those contained in it have been printed twice, each time 50 foolscap printed pages, while more than one hundred copies of it were seized in the searches and were in the possession of the Prosecution (and some of which from the unexhibited searches were later on returned). The W.P.P. resolutions, constitution, rules etc. also have been printed several times, though a large number of copies of them were available for reference or distribution, as copies of exhibits. It is needless to quote all the numbers of such exhibits. For example see, Exh. P. 51 which is same as P. 111, P. 137, P. 235, P. 306, Exh. P. 52 same as P. 129, 218, Exh. 56 same as P. 136, 162, 234, 307. Exh. P. 138 same as P. 161, 309, Exh. P. 217 same as 229, 517. Exh. P. 514 same as 549(9) of which the Prosecution themselves note on the head of 514 that they found 150 copies of it. A whole company of Bengali, Hindi, Urdu translators were engaged to translate vernacular documents, which have been later on withdrawn. Who wasted money and time on these translators? In one place the Prosecution have put into exhibit six identical telegram forms, with nothing written on them. They printed the forms six times in the exhibits and ultimately cancelled them (Exh. P. 98). Probably because it appeared too ridiculous for an already ridiculous Prosecution to print six blank telegram forms to prove a conspiracy, when millions of these forms are turned out every year by the telegraph department and are given free at any post office window! There is



still one more method of wasting pages well-known in the printing trade. In the case of several exhibits they have printed only one line and left the whole foolscap page blank, which ordinarily prints 46 lines. (For example see Exhs. P. 618, 619, 631, 635, 647 etc. etc.) Is this done by mistake? No. There are 43 cancelled exhibits of which they have printed only the number and description making 57 lines altogether and they have spent full 40 foolscap pages for these 57 lines which, at the most, would have taken two pages. This type of waste does not include those exhibits which have been retained on record and are not cancelled. I have roughly calculated the total number of printed pages of such exhibits as have been withdrawn altogether and of those exhibit booklets and pamphlets, hundreds of copies of which are available in the searches and yet they have been printed, not only once or twice but even six times. The number of wasted pages comes to no less than 880, and a more thorough examination for which I have had no time, would increase the number to over one thousand at least. Are we responsible for this waste or the Prosecution and the Court, who instructed, supervised and carried out this vast bungle? While on the one hand they have printed blank rejected telegram forms extending over several pages, they and this Court refused to print, when we petitioned for it, the only copy available, in India or England, of the Thesis of the Second World Congress of the Communist International, Exh. P. 2395, consisting of only 83 pages. The sense of economy and propriety has dawned suddenly in the case of our statements only and those exhibits, which we need to be printed for defence, when all along the Prosecution have wasted public money over one thousand useless pages, 49 useless witnesses and several other things whose list is not small. That is the sample of Government's economy and fairness and "facilities" for defence.

Another point of attack of the Prosecution on our statement is the time taken for their delivery. Opposing our bail applications before the Hon'ble High Court, on 25th May 1931, when the eleventh accused was delivering his statement, Mr. Kemp accused us of wasting time and said: "If they (the accused) behaved reasonably, they cannot take more than two or three

months." Now the time taken by the Court for recording our statements does not lie in our hands at all. The arrangements made by this Court for the recording of statements are wholly responsible for "the inordinately long time" taken by the statements. The speed of recording is not limited by the speed of our delivery but by the speed of the stenographers, who are employed to do the recording. If our individual speeds were responsible the number of pages done by each of us on a normal working day would have varied greatly. But we find on the contrary that the number of pages per day per accused are more or less uniform. This is due to the fact that we have timed our speed to that of the stenographers. The Prosecution witnesses who have reported our vernacular or English speeches have deposed to the fact that we spoke more than a hundred words per minute (P.W. Nos. 180 and 276). The recording of statements here is being done at the rate of 30 words per minute on an average. I have conclusively shown this in my application filed in this Court on 5th June 1931 as soon as I knew of the baseless allegation made by Mr. Kemp before the High Court. By my comments on the speed of the stenographers, I do not want to be an instrument of blaming them. They are delivering the goods for what they are paid. But I cannot help using the fact for defending my position, if you assail me. If the Court had engaged men with higher practice and speed, with better pay, we would have finished the statements in one third the time that has been taken. Today, 4th January 1932 is the 189th working day, (since 18th March 1931) of our statement. If the Court or the Government were so very anxious to speed up matters, I would have been finishing my portion on 24th June 1931. A single factor of the speed of recording is responsible for this delay of more than seven long months. What will probably have taken one full year would have been done in four months, if those who are responsible for this arrangement had themselves been "reasonable" or had not conspired to deliberately cause delay, prolong our imprisonment, and then turn round and accuse us of having wasted time. With facts and figures, I assert, Sir, that it is the Government, the Prosecution and the Court, who are responsible for wasting nearly thirteen

months of our life in a prison, while bourgeois law hypocritically holds us "innocent till proven guilty," in the following manner:

- (1) Remand period between arrest on 20th March 1929 and commencement of Magisterial Inquiry on 12th June 1929.  
.....Two months and 23 days.
  - (2) Period between Magistrate's semi-Judgment Order on 11th January 1930 and commencement of Sessions Trial on 31st January. ....20 days.
  - (3) Loss of time in statements due to the slow speed of recording by the Court through its stenographers or by its own hand.  
.....Seven months.
  - (4) Loss of time in Lower Court over 49 witnesses found unnecessary in the Sessions; on an average. ....Two months.
- 
- Total one year and 13 days

This is exclusive of the holidays, which will total more than five months during the three years of our under-trial period.

With such crying facts the Government impudently states in the House of Commons that we have followed delaying tactics and this Court also threatened to note several times, the minutes and seconds taken by some accused to put a question to a witness, simply because, not knowing bourgeois law, he took time to frame it in a suitable manner to satisfy legal technicality. This is only one of the samples of justice meted out to us.

Your Honour has several times in your orders noted that you are trying to keep on strictly judicial grounds and to give judicial and impartial opinion. But the very bourgeois law which you are trying to operate is basically against human considerations being applied to those whom it attacks, and as such your judicial and impartial decisions are bound to result against every human demand of ours. For instance whenever any one of us (including myself) applied for bail on grounds of the sickness of our families, who have none to help them, Your Honour in your orders "sympathised" with us, but refused bail on "judicial grounds," "as the law does not permit". So, even when the human consideration in an I.C.S. Judge allows him to "sympathise" with us, the "law"

does not permit the human sympathy to be brought into actual practice: it prevents it from bearing fruit. It means that bourgeois imperialist law is incompatible with the exercise of sympathy and human considerations, that means it gives no quarter to its class-opponent on any ground. In our system we do not hold the human to be above the supposedly abstract nature of law. Hence on your own observations, our system would be superior, therefore, deserving to take the place of bourgeois imperialist "law". It also proves, Sir, that you may be "judicial," but you will not be human!

D/- 5.1.32

**149. Misinterpretation of our attitude on the question of violence and non-violence—are our statements Defence or Defiance? It is defence of the right of every Indian to be a Communist and to belong to a Communist Party**

I have stated so far the principles that I held and the activities that I engaged myself in. In the first part of the statement from paras 1 to 72, I have described the Phenomenon of Social Growth that generates the class-struggle and the course it has followed in the foreign countries from which Communist theory is derived. This is done in order to refute the false statements made by the Prosecution regarding the origin and growth of Communism. The second part from paras 73 to 105 deals with the Social Basis of the class-struggle in India, in order to refute the allegation that we create artificially a class-struggle where there is none and that we import ideas and methods at the behest of the Communist International, where there is no basis for them. The third part from paras 106 to 147 deals with the Trade Union Struggle in which we took part and especially the Bombay Textile Strike, about which so much evidence is led. It also deals with the smaller and detailed items of exhibits which may have been left in the first two parts. All the three parts are necessary in order to understand the case. They will show that what we have done is to subscribe to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and to tell them to the people. To hold certain views to propagate them and to form parties for that purpose is our inalienable right, which exists in most bourgeois countries. We claim to exercise that right in India and it

does not amount to a "conspiracy to wage war". The Prosecution have tried to make out that the Trade Union work that we did, the big strikes in which we took part, were a step leading to a violent upheaval and armed insurrection. But if they were honest and if they had read properly the very literature they have put in evidence, they would have found that the strikes and demonstrations that we led were not of that type that were culculated to lead an armed insurrection. Armed insurrection and revolt is not a joke nor a piece of romanticism for a few youths to indulge in. They require a deep economic crises, affecting not only the oppressed but the oppressors also. But that alone is not sufficient. They require a strong working-class party. But that also is not sufficient. They require intense work in the army, in the navy, in all classes of the population, intense technical preparation. Now in all the evidence that has been put down here, is there a single scrap of paper, a single word to show that we were preparing for or had even the intention of preparing for such an insurrection? There is none. There is no doubt that as Communists we pointed out the historical course that the Indian working-class and the peasantry will take in its class-struggle against Capitalism whether foreign or Indian. But "bourgeois democracy" in the heart of the British Empire, near the very threshold of His Majesty's Palace in London, permits its citizens the right of telling this. We are certainly not Utopians nor dreamers to think that Imperialism and the bourgeoisie will allow any party to actually prepare for and embark upon insurrection. But we do claim the right to hold the principles of Leninism and propagate them.

In their affidavit filed before the Hon. High Court on 18.6.31 the Prosecution admit in the first para "that there is no evidence on record showing that any of the accused herein committed any overt act of violence". The Crown Counsel in his argument before the High Court, in April 1931 had gone even further (from which position he retreated later on) and said that there was "no overt act *alleged against the accused*". The question of *violent overt act* was raised after this. Paragraphs 2, 3 or 4 in the affidavit filed in June make the unwarranted statements that inconsistency with the

principles of Leninism to which we owe allegiance. We "clearly contemplated and made preparation for the commission of acts of violence". Now the only evidence on record on this question of violence and non-violence are the speeches delivered by some of us and the Leninist works dealing with the Marxian theory on the overthrow of the State, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and the historical aspect of the revolutionary struggles. The question of violence and non-violence is so much emphasised, not because we were contemplating "acts of violence" but because in the present atmosphere of India all political activity is incessantly cut across by insistence on non-violence as a principle. Attempts are made by Gandhism to distort History and the people are told that the development of India in the past has been based on the strict adherence to non-violence and that the future also must be so, if we are to achieve freedom. It is to explode this false claim, which is encouraged by Imperialism, because it is to its advantage, that correct historical data have to be put before the people. If this is not done, the weapon whether non-violence or violence in the given situation becomes a fetish, and social progress is hampered. But just as an ordinary citizen carrying a revolver in England and not pledged to non-violence cannot be said to be preparing for commission of acts of violence, so a Communist carrying Lenin's Books, "On the Road to Insurrection" or "The State and Revolution" cannot be charged with contemplating "commission of acts of violence against the state".

The Committing Magistrate in his Order while dealing with this question has distinguished our outlook from that of the Terrorists or Anarchists and said: "In justice to Communism, however, it must be emphasised that this violence is in no way allied to anarchism or terrorism. It cannot be denied that Communism is, when once its premises have been granted, ruthlessly logical" (Page 38). The Magistrate recognised this but he puts his own premises behind our conclusions, without which he could not have kept us here, if he had followed our premises and ruthless and correct logic. The Prosecution did the same, with the result that our premises about insurrection and commencement of the revolution are taken away, and our outline of

principles and their preaching is twisted by their own bourgeois premise into "conspiracy to wage war" and intention to commit acts of violence and we are put in prison. They take our logic, but insert their own premise and illogically convict us.

I have, however, to say one thing with regard to this reference to our differences with anarchism or terrorism. There is no doubt we do not agree with their principles or methods. But our disagreement is not of the treacherous type as is exhibited by the nationalist bourgeois Congress. I have in my statement criticised the Congress leadership and also other parties with whom I disagree. The Congress also disagrees and denounces the terrorists and Communists. But it does not rest with mere denunciation; it does something more. We disagree with the Congress leadership; but we are not prepared to cooperate with the British Government in putting it down. We disagree with the terrorists, but we are not prepared to assist the armed terrorism of the British Dictatorship in sending them to the gallows. While the Congress leadership (the first amongst them being Mahatma Gandhi himself) in their official statement say: "As to Bengal, the Congress is at one with Government in condemning assassinations and should heartily cooperate with Government in the measures that may be found necessary . . ." Their latest statement (dated 31st December 1931) which means the Congress is willing to be the hangman on behalf of Imperialism. The Congress President, Mr. Patel, while condemning the Comilla young girls, made the idiotic statement that: "It does not become our women to wield lethal weapons of death and destruction. It is given to a woman to create and sustain life and not kill". This ignoramus forgot the history of India, of his own province, where women have led armies and fought battles. But a reactionary as he is, unable to wield any weapon and given to "sustaining only himself and creating life", he wants to condemn Indian womanhood to cooking and rearing children; and yet he is not ashamed to hypocritically call upon woman to work in the national movement, at the same time intending all along, as is revealed above, to keep them slaves of the kitchen and the cradle in future India. We are not prepared to subscribe to treachery and

condemnation, which can be indulged in by a bourgeois president because he is protected by his nationalist newspapers, who print his interviews but are afraid to say what the defenceless women themselves have to say in defence. Our attitude is of disagreement with both the Congress and the anarchists; but we believe in winning over to our side by argument and reason, by our work and by the indication of the correctness of our principles by History, those youths, workers and peasants who follow the wrong lead of these two organisations. But we do not betray them, we do not become their hangmen "at one with Imperialism". We recognise that the Congress as well other parties have hundreds of self-sacrificing men willing to give up their lives for national freedom. We disagree with the views and methods of the Congress leadership when they tell the working-class and peasantry to cooperate with Capitalism, their class-enemy; but that does not mean that we will join hands with foreign Imperialism in massacring them. We must, in special circumstances, even defend them, not by joining their organisations but under our banner, when they are attacked by Imperialism. While at the same time we will tell the workers and peasants and youths under their influence that the methods preached by them will not lead India to freedom; however revolutionary their actions might look temporarily; that not "mock-battles by permission" nor midnight armed coups can achieve freedom but only the historical road of Leninism can do it.

A question has been sometimes put whether what we say is defence or defiance. I have to state, Sir, that we are putting up a defence in such a thing is allowed under bourgeois law. But if defence means desertion of principles we cannot put up with it. It is not defiance, because thereby I do not gain my objective. It is defence and not defiance, in deadly earnest. Only it is not defence so much of an individual, as of the right to propagate the principles for which that individual stood and stands.

I do not defy; but defend and urge that this Court do recognise the right of every Indian to hold Communist principles, to belong to a Communist Party, to be one with the International of the World Proletariat, to carry on trade union and literary activity,



while subscribing to Leninism—a right which exists in all the advanced bourgeois democracies and in England itself, on the basic principles of whose judicial system and political liberties this country is said to be governed.

Sd./ R. L. Yorke

Q. You have now read over your statement and it has been corrected and amended as and where requested by you. Are you now satisfied that the above record is correct?

A. Yes.

Sd./ R. L. Yorke  
13/1/32

Sd./ S. A. Dange  
13/1/32

Certified that the above is a full and true account of the statement of the accused taken down by stenographers (except for portions indicated) or read out in my presence and hearing and transcribed by stenographers subsequently and read over by accused and corrected and amended as and where requested by him and admitted by him to be correct.

Sd./ R. L. Yorke  
13/1/32

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# **MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE**

**March 1929—July 1933**

**MEERUT  
THE MEMORIAL  
FOR THE MEERUT PRISONERS  
By Romain Rolland  
THE MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE  
By a Barrister-at-Law  
THE APPEAL**

**Published by the Meerut Prisoners' Release Committee  
C/o. N.A.F.T.A., 58 Theobalds Road, London, W.C. 1**

## Meerut

### Statement of the Meerut Prisoners' Release Committee, London

The Meerut Prisoners' Release Committee has endeavoured to present to the world the main features of the Meerut Conspiracy Case by adding to the original pamphlet prepared by a Barrister-at-Law with a preface by Romain Rolland the results of the appeal of the prisoners to the High Court of Allahabad, together with the important political statements contained in the judgment.

The text of the Memorial of the prisoners to the Governor of the United Provinces regarding the treatment of political prisoners is also included. This shows that even while the Conspiracy Case prisoners were in jail, they continued to fight against imperialist oppressors.

This remarkable case was described as follows by Justice Sulaiman in the High Court of Allahabad: "The trial has become somewhat notorious on account of its unprecedented duration." It also earned an international reputation for the unprecedented savagery exhibited in the sentences passed upon twenty-seven of the accused by Justice Yorke at Meerut on January 16, 1933.

The learned Judge took over five months to compile his judgment embodied in a document of six hundred and seventy-six foolscap printed pages, which closed with the following admission:

"As to the progress made in this conspiracy its main achievements have been the establishment of Workers' and Peasants' Parties in Bengal, Bombay and Punjab and the U.P., but perhaps of deeper gravity was the hold that the members of the Bombay Party acquired over the workers in the textile industry in Bombay as shown by the extent of the control which they exercised during the strike of 1928 and the success they were achieving in pushing

forward a thoroughly revolutionary policy in the Girmi Kamgar Union after the strike came to an end.

"The fact that the revolution was not expected actually to come to pass for some years seems to me to be no defence whatever. No one expects to bring about a revolution in a day. It is in the light of all the above facts that I have endeavoured to assess the relative guilt of the different accused in this case, and to 'make the punishment to fit the crime'.

"Convicting these twenty-seven accused as stated in each of the individual chapters, I sentence them as follows:

Muzaffar Ahmad, accused, transportation for life.

Dange, Spratt, Ghate, Joglekar and Nimbkar accused, each to transportation for a period of 12 (twelve) years.

Bradley, Mirajkar and Usmani accused, each to transportation for a period of 10 (ten) years.

Sohan Singh Josh, Majid and Goswami accused, each to transportation for a period of 7 (seven) years.

Ajodhya Prasad, Adhikari, P. C. Joshi and Desai accused, each to transportation for a period of 5 (five) years.

Chakravarty, Basak, Hutchinson, Mittra, Jhabwala and Sehgal accused, each to 4 (four) years rigorous imprisonment.

Shamsul Huda, Alve, Kastle, Gauri Shankar and Kadam accused, each to 3 (three) years rigorous imprisonment."

The notorious trial began on March 15, 1929, and closed on January 16, 1933. During the whole of this period the majority of the accused were confined to jail. During the course of the trial, the veteran nationalist, D. R. Thengdi, who in 1923 was the President of the All India Trade Union Congress and one of the early pioneers of the Indian Trade Union Movement, died, his health having been impaired by the conditions of imprisonment.

Kishorilal Ghose died recently as a result of a disease contracted whilst in prison.

The Meerut Conspiracy Case was conducted on a gigantic scale. The evidence consisted of twenty-five printed volumes of folio size. There were altogether over 3,500 prosecution exhibits, and no less than 320 witnesses were examined.

A mass of documentary evidence consisting of papers in printed, typewritten and manuscript forms, books, pamphlets and

letters, notes and other documents found in the possession of the various accused at the time of the searches, as well as those found at the search of numerous other places were also produced, and there was a mass of oral evidence both from India and England to prove them. There was also voluminous evidence to prove the various political activities of all the accused and their association with each other.

The preliminary enquiry before the magistrate took over seven months, resulting in the commitment of the accused to the District Sessions on January 14, 1930.

In the Session Court the prosecution evidence took over thirteen months, the recording of statements of the accused occupied over ten months, the arguments continued for over four and a half months. The Prosecuting Counsel occupied two months for his final speech and the learned Session Judge took over five months to prepare his judgment.

Even though the majority of the accused were confined to jail for the whole of the period of the trial, the vile conditions of colonial jails did not crush their revolutionary spirit.

During the Civil Disobedience Campaign in 1930, thousands of political prisoners were cast into these hells, and the prison conditions were unmasked in a Memorial addressed to his Excellency the Governor of the United Provinces and signed by thirty of the Meerut accused, protesting against the savage and inhuman treatment to which political prisoners were being subjected in the jail. We make no apology for printing the Memorial in full; not only does it expose the prison conditions in India, it also shows the courage and devotion which actuated the Meerut accused to present such protest whilst they themselves were being subjected to similar guardianship.

## **For The Meerut Prisoners**

### **Against Imperialist Terror**

**Romain Rolland**

The world to-day presents the spectacle of an inferno. The man who detaches himself from the narrow circle of the privileged nations, and within these nations, from the classes, and within these classes from the privileged castes, sooner or later discovers that every civilisation in which he rejoices and of which he is proud rests upon the atrocious, degrading and murderous exploitation of nine-tenths of the peoples of the earth. When this revelation has penetrated his being, the joy of living dies within him till the moment when he resolves to do battle to destroy this canker, even though in the combat himself must be destroyed.

Those who renounce the struggle in advance, the great herd of the subservient and the passive, strive to content themselves with the miserable excuse for not acting, that what is has always been and that one cannot change it. This is false. Truly the history of humanity has always been that of the oppression of peoples, of classes and of castes, and of the desperate effort of the oppressed to free themselves, but never has the crushing of nine-tenths of the inhabitants of this planet reached such a degree of deliberate organisation as in this last half-century. The great oppression of to-day is no longer imposed by one or more individuals, groups or states, but by a system which extends to all the great exploiting states, by an Imperialism of money, which transcending all the national antagonisms and conflicts, dominates the international policy of the great Empires. Menaced by the trembling of capitalist economy, which in its difficulties plunges to madly destructive courses, shaken by the revolts which to-day like earthquakes stir the enslaved peoples, this hideous oppression manifests itself yet more brutally, employing to an extent and with

a rigour unexampled, the most monstrous means. Even the semblance of legality with which the modern States hitherto sought to mask their abuse of power, has fallen. Imperialist civilisation now reveals its true face; the law of the fist, the "Faustrecht," the "Sit pro ratione voluntas." By terror it was established and is maintained.

This terror which now weighs on every part of the earth delivered over to capitalist exploitation, has assumed gigantic proportions in the great territories of India and of the Far East, where it sucks the blood of millions of human beings. It is inherent in the fatal character of the crime that the blood-suckers cannot release their victims without perishing. England has subsisted for a century upon the body of India, bled white; her prosperity already tottering, would collapse in the very hour that her prey should escape her. The corpulent ease of Holland rests in the same way upon the substance of the Dutch Indies which nourishes her. France has made of her Empire of Indo-China not only a source of super-profits, but a bastion of war which her proconsuls of armed finance, like those of ancient Rome, of the Republic of publicans, have made their base of operations for the forthcoming struggle in the Pacific, now preparing, and for the partition of China. This is why a state of siege reigns secretly or openly in Bengal as in Annam, in Batavia, at Hanoi and at Peshawar. This is why thousands have been condemned, or have rotted for years without trial in the jails and concentration camps. In May 1932, there were 80,000 prisoners in British India, whose only crime had been to follow the watchword of non-violence of Gandhi and of the Indian National Congress.

In French Indo-China on January 14th, 1933, there were 2,970 political prisoners, out of a total of 6,897 convicted since the Yen-Bay affair (official figures), of whom a large number were old men, women and children, guilty only of having pleaded for a reduction of taxes, the abolition of corporal punishment by private employers, and universal suffrage. In the Dutch Indies on January 1st, 1932, there were 10,000 political prisoners; in China 50,000 without account of the hecatombs of massacres; in Corea 35,000. This list makes no mention of the thousands who have been

arrested, tortured and condemned in Japan, of the thousands of victims in the Italian, Belgian and Portuguese colonies, and in South Africa. It leaves unrecorded the victims of the diabolical American Imperialism, that compound of hypocrisy and cruelty, which makes its churches the commercial travellers of the Standard Oil Co., which makes itself the abettor of the corrupt marshals of the Kuomintang and of the assassins of Cuba, which restores independence to the Philippines the more easily to encompass their new economic enslavement, and which in South America stokes up the fire of war and sanguinary dictatorships.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*

So long as the oppressed reacted against the oppressors only by intermittent and piecemeal spasms of revolts, coercion prevailed against them swiftly and noiselessly. It only began to lose all measure of restraint when it found itself confronted by immense organised masses, like those of the Satyagraha Gandhi movement in British India. But this great wave, which the genius of one man holds in leash, static within the limits of non-violence again reassured the reformist bourgeoisie, anxious to preserve the existing social order at the price of some concessions. It required the stubborn obstinacy of a viceroy, and of an obsolescent and narrow-minded caste, to drive to desperation this magnanimous opposition which would have sought to conciliate the interest of England with those of India.

All is changed since, in these latter years, the working masses and the peasants have realised the need to organise themselves in a fighting revolutionary bloc, resolved to transform the social system. A new era has opened in the revolt of the oppressed world. In British India it dates back hardly more than five years to the Bombay Textile strike of 1928, and to the formation of the Girm Kamgar Union. In Annam its commencement was still more recent: in February 1930, when the Communist Party of Indo-China was founded at the same time as the Viet-Nam-Quoc-Dan-Dang (the Indo-Chinese Kuomintang) which carried out the nationalist insurrections of Yen-Bay.



Repression followed, immediate and implacable. In Indo-China was set-up a special permanent Court, "The Criminal Commission" of Saigon, which tries cases in secret, the defending Counsel officially nominated and denied the right to examine the documents material to the case "should the safety of the State demand". Up to July 1st, 1932, this Court had passed 1,094 sentences, 83 of death, 160 sentences of penal servitude for life, 420 of deportation. On May 8th, 1933, it sentenced 8 Indo-Chinese revolutionaries to death, 18 to penal servitude for life, and 100 others to 900 years imprisonment. The majority of these had been in jail for 3 years.

In British India the judicial machinery is heavier, clumsier, more antiquated. It endeavours solemnly to falsify legality, instead of strangling it, as in Indo-China, behind closed doors. It has closed by the scandalous judgment at Meerut, a monstrous trial. For four years, from June 1929 to January 1933, this process dragged itself out, under a mountain of paper, comprising more than 2,600 documents and tens of thousands of printed pages. The cost, stupidly in these times of economic ruin, amounted to more than £ 120,000 sterling. The sentences are of such revolting injustice that even the liberal opinion of moderate English people has been dismayed and is endeavouring to utter some timid protests. But it is necessary to arouse the opinion of the world; for this trial is not merely the trial of 27 condemned persons; it is the trial of the system of Government which has passed judgment upon them. As one of the condemned, R. S. Nimbkar, General Secretary of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party, has clearly established, English liberalism is not only powerless to repair the verdict, it is even incapable of conceiving either the illegal proceedings which have become current or the exceptional laws which the imperialist terrorism of Great Britain applies to six-sevenths of the people of its Empire, to one-sixth of the population of the world.

The Labour Government which knowingly made use of these methods, or at least permitted them to continue under its auspices, became itself the prosecutor of this trial. It thereby trampled under foot all the doctrines of middle-class liberalism of which the

Labour Party was the outcome. More serious still it deliberately speculated on the passivity of the workers' movement in England, and wittingly pandered to this passivity, making of it an accomplice, in order to exterminate the movement of the Indian workers who form six-sevenths of the British Empire. Such is the shame of which the workers' movement in England and in Europe must cleanse itself. The weight of this shame will fall fatally upon the workers' movement, if it does not at once arise and react against the criminal laxity of its officials.

The Trade Union Congress is at this moment making a great stir about the coming celebration of the centenary of the martyred labourers of Dorchester who, in 1834, were transported for having committed the crime of forming a Trade Union, and who are commemorated to-day as the founders of British Trade Unionism. Three generous Englishmen, Philip Spratt, B. F. Bradley, and Lester Hutchinson have associated themselves with the Indian workers in the spirit of brotherhood, and have been tried with them at Meerut. After four years imprisonment, during which one of the accused died, the Trade Unionists of Meerut have been sentenced to transportation under murderous conditions, one for life, the others for twelve years, ten years, seven years and five years. Their only crime is that of laying the foundations of an independent Trade Union organisation in India. The aim of British Imperialism is to nip in the bud every effort, every chance of the millions of Indian workers, who are struggling in an inferno, to band themselves together in their own defence. Will the world of labour allow this to be accomplished? Will the world of intellect remain silent?

We appeal to both, to the workers, and to the intellectuals. We denounce the fearful exploitation of Indian labour, which keeps the peoples in a state of under-nourishment and of exhaustion, which makes them sweat out with their blood the gold which is lost in the bottomless coffers of the British Empire.

We denounce the arbitrary arrest of the men whose hearts desired to put an end to these crimes, against whom, as was admitted by the Government of India itself in the Legislative Assembly on March 1929, no unlawful action could be proved.

**They are for us the living symbol of those thousands of victims in the great combat which today is being fought throughout the world to break the yoke of Imperialism. All these victims make a victory, for they bear witness to the iniquity which is crushing them, and to the irresistible rising of the new revolutionary forces which are awakening mankind.**

**Nothing henceforward will arrest them.**

# **The Memorial of the Prisoners of Meerut Conspiracy Case**

**Meerut, September 3, 1930**

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—The memorial of the undersigned most respectfully sheweth:

(1) That your memorialists as under-trial prisoners in the Meerut Conspiracy Case are the inmates of the District Jail, Meerut, and have been here since March, 1929.

(2) That since the Civil Disobedience Movement began, there has been a very large addition to the population of the jail, so much so that we believe that the jail is overcrowded far in excess of its usual capacity and the prescribed maximum.

(3) That apart from the fact that the system of making differentiations among political prisoners is bad in principle, the classification of these political prisoners into "A", "B", and "C" classes has been made in such a way as to cause great dissatisfaction, and in many instances no regard is paid even to the rules on the subject framed by the Government. Instances are not wanting where invidious distinction has been made between prisoners of equal status and education.

(4) That the "C" class prisoners were from the beginning dissatisfied with the food supplied to them, particularly with regard to the "bhujj".

(5) That they made repeated representations to the authorities concerned, with no practical result, and when a number of them declined to take the food, they were punished with "cells", "standing handcuffs," and "bar-fetters".

(6) That the whole jail was full of all sorts of reports and rumours regarding the treatment meted out to them, and representations were made on their behalf by the "A" and "B"

class prisoners. A number of your memorialists also made representations in writing to the Superintendent of Jail on August 21.

(7) That it may be mentioned in this connection that since the present jailor has come the discontent has further increased by reason of his harsh treatment and the abusive language he is reported to have been in the habit of using towards the prisoners.

(8) That alternately with the punishment meted out to the prisoners, and reported assaults on them by the ordinary convicts at the instance of the jail officials, offers are reported to have been made to these prisoners of prompt release if they would tender an apology. About sixty prisoners, unable to stand this treatment, accepted this offer and were released.

(9) That a number of boys were kept in cells at the absolute mercy of the convict overseers about whose habits and character the less said the better.

(10) That interviews with relatives, & c., such as are allowed by the jail rules, have been forbidden in many cases. The relatives of the prisoners coming to the jail for interviews have also been treated discourteously, having been kept waiting all day outside the jail gate, where there is no convenience for visitors, only to be told in the evening that interview is refused.

(11) That it was hoped that the Inspector-General of Prisons, in the course of his visit, which took place on August 27, would inquire personally into the grievances of the "C" class prisoners, but so far as your memorialists are aware he did not visit them at all. One of your memorialists, Dr. Mukerjee as well as the "A" and "B" class prisoners, made an oral representation about the "C" class prisoners to the Inspector-General when he visited them.

(12) That on the morning of August 29, at about 8.30, your memorialists were surprised to hear loud groans, and it seemed to them there was considerable commotion in and about the circle where the "C" class prisoners are lodged. *This was shortly* followed by a gunshot and the alarm bell. Within a few minutes a

very large number of armed policemen, preceded by a number of warders armed with lathis and rifles, rushed inside. Subsequently the Superintendent of Jail and the Superintendent of Police, followed within a few minutes by the District Magistrate and the Joint Magistrate, went in. The cries and groans continued until these officials went inside. As long as they were there, and thereafter, there was absolute silence.

(13) That some of your memorialists returning from court at about 12 noon found whipping going on and several prisoners lying on the ground groaning and bleeding.

(14) That within less than four hours from the start of what the District Magistrate calls a "serious" mutiny, inquiry was finished and punishment was given, and it did not, so far as your memorialists' information goes, take more than half an hour to conduct the inquiry.

(15) That the official communiqué issued by the District Magistrate, which states that it was a "serious mutiny," and that it was quelled "without the use of firearms," and that "no prisoner was reported to have been injured," seems to your memorialists to be self-contradictory, and calculated to mislead the public as to the extent and character of the matter.

(16) That although the disturbance itself was of a trivial character, and no allegations being made that any jail official was hurt, and it being stated that no prisoner was injured, nevertheless no fewer than fifty-six prisoners were given bar-fetters, and thirteen prisoners were given the maximum punishment (thirty stripes) allowed under the Whipping Act, which is a severe and inhuman punishment. It is further reported that a large supply of bar-fetters has been ordered.

(17) That the victims of the whipping were mostly boys from sixteen and seventeen up to twenty-two years.

(18) That your memorialists have reason to believe that in some cases at least the whipping administered was not in accordance with the regulations laid down by Your Excellency's Government. One Anglo-Indian Inspector of Police is alleged to have snatched the Rattan away from the convict who had been

ordered to do the job, and began flogging him. As a result certain parts of the body were injured which are not specified in the regulations. It is alleged that all those who were flogged have been put in cells and have not been given proper medical care. One of them, who was extremely weak and was in bar-fetters, was caned in that condition against the provisions of the Prisons Act, and subsequently flung into a solitary cell. One prisoner was so severely injured by the flogging that two days after he was still subject to repeated fainting fits.

(19) That in identifying the persons for punishment, it seems that those who had taken a prominent part in presenting the common grievances to the authorities were singled out. It may be mentioned in this connection that a number of ordinary convicts who took part in the identification and in the execution of the caning order were given substantial remission.

(20) That according to the official communiqué the District Magistrate held a summary inquiry. It is not clear what this means nor under what law the whipping was administered. According to the Prisons Act, it is the Jail Superintendent who is authorised to inquire into the jail offences and mete out punishments.

(21) That your memorialists, an inmates of the jail for the last eighteen months and as political prisoners, consider it their duty to acquaint Your Excellency's Government with all the facts which are within their knowledge of information. While from the limitations of their present position your memorialists cannot verify all the reports and rumours that have come to their ears, they assure Your Excellency that in spite of many things much more serious than what has been stated, being heard by them, they have put down only those which they seriously believe to have the largest amount of truth as foundation.

In these circumstances your memorialists pray that a searching and strict inquiry be made into the event of August 29, the inhuman and brutal punishment of thirty stripes given to thirteen Satyagrahis, and that the officials responsible for these be brought to book. It is further prayed that the serious injustice and

oppression which the "C" class political prisoners are suffering be forthwith removed.

Signed by thirty prisoners.

S. S. MIRAJKAR  
D. R. THENGDI  
SOHAN SINGH JOSH  
S. A. DANGE  
S. N. BANERJEE  
AJODHYA PRASAD  
G. ADHIKARI  
R. S. NIMBKAR  
K. N. JOGLEKAR  
M. A. MAJID  
L. R. KADAM  
DHARANI GOSWAMI  
SHAMSUL HUDA  
GOPENDRA CHAKRAVARTI  
R. MITRA

M. G. DESAI  
GOPAL BASAK  
K. L. GHOSH  
A. A. ALWE  
GAURI SHANKAR  
S. H. JHABWALLA  
G. R. KASLE  
MUZAFFAR AHMAD  
V. N. MUKERJI  
P. C. JOSHI  
K. N. SAIGAL  
H. L. HUTCHINSON  
PHILIP SPRATT  
B. F. BRADLEY  
SHAUKAT USMANI



## **The Appeal**

**From the Judgment of R. L. Yorke  
Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut**

The fierce sentences pronounced in the Lower Court at Meerut on twenty-six of the accused, of 170 years' imprisonment and transportation, and one sentence of transportation for life, shocked the majority of people outside of the ranks of dyed-in-the-wool reactionary imperialists, and it was no difficult task to gather people of various shades of political opinion into a committee. And so the Meerut Prisoners' Release Committee came into existence in January, 1933, its main objectives being:

To organise a wide agitation for the release of the prisoners and to raise £ 1,000 to meet the cost of appeal to the High Court at Allahabad against the judgment of R. L. Yorke, District Sessions Judge, Meerut.

It is with no small amount of gratification that the Committee place on record the splendid response to the appeal for £ 1,000, which was actually raised in the course of six months, contributions coming from hundreds of working-class organisations throughout this country and also from Australia and South Africa. If special mention can be made of any of the contributors, then we should have to draw attention to the magnificent donation of £ 100 made by the Nelson and District Weavers' Association. The propaganda conducted throughout the working-class movement around the question of release of the prisoners and the £ 1,000 appeal, raised such a storm of indignation that resolutions of protest were adopted throughout this and other countries and forwarded to the Secretary of State for India. It would be no exaggeration to state that the eyes of the world were focused on the appeal proceedings in the High Court of Allahabad when the

case was opened on July 24th, 1933. Everyone expected that the proceedings would be very protracted. Counsel for the Defence was actually briefed for three months, but in fact the appeal proceedings lasted exactly eight days.

The long duration of the trial, which extended over a period of nearly four-and-a-half years and the relatively short period taken by the High Court Judge to hear the "appeal" cannot be regarded as accidents. Judge Sulaiman made some pointed references in connection with the conduct of the case in the Lower Court, without, however, casting aspersions on his learned brother Yorke. Judge Sulaiman said, "Much time would be saved if the Sessions Judge does not feel himself called upon to discuss in his judgment all the evidence produced by the prosecution and the defence. A judgment has not to be a résumé of the entire evidence or a discussion of the relevancy of all the evidence. A court is entitled to select such evidence as it considers important and sufficient to prove the point for consideration.

"We feel that if the Learned Sessions Judge had not discussed the entire evidence with minute detail, he need not have written so lengthily a judgment and need not have taken so much time."

The significant political feature of the long-drawn-out court proceedings, which would have been much longer still if the prisoners had for their own purposes taken fuller advantage of the method of procedure—was the effect it had upon the workers' and peasants' organisations in India. It is impossible to arrest thirty-two people who have been in the forefront of working-class and peasant movements, especially in an illiterate country like India, without having a very devastating effect upon these organisations. During the trial the organisations with which these imprisoned leaders had been connected, were more or less regarded as illegal organisations and as a consequence the Girmi Kamgar Union which had, according to Government figures, some 60,000 members at the time of the arrest of the whole of its Executive in March, 1929, had practically ceased to exist at the time of the appeal in July, 1933.

Although the appeal proceedings were confined to eight days, the judgment pronounced by Judge Sulaiman is a very important one to the whole of the working-class and the peasants throughout the British Empire. It also has a particular significance for all sections of the 350,000,000 Indian population. Those people who imagine that the peoples of the Empire are free to determine their own destiny in a constitutional way would do well to take heed of some of the quotations extracted from the judgment delivered by Judge Sulaiman in the appeal proceedings:

### **What is Conspiracy?**

"Depriving His Majesty of the Sovereignty of British India would obviously include the severance of the connection of India with the Imperial Government in England. It cannot, therefore, be questioned that any conspiracy to establish the complete independence of India, as distinct from obtaining for it the status of a self-governing dominion within the British Empire, would be tantamount to conspiracy to deprive His Majesty of the Sovereignty of British India. *The same result would follow if there was a conspiracy to establish a perfectly democratic or republican form of Government in India outside the British Empire.*"

The Indian Penal Code is so constructed that it is not necessary to commit an illegal act to prove conspiracy: Judge Sulaiman stated:

"It is important to note that the offence of criminal conspiracy is complete as soon as two or more persons agree to do or cause to be done an illegal act. . .". For the purpose of Section 121-A, it is not necessary that any act or illegal omission shall take place in pursuance of the conspiracy. *The agreement in itself is enough to constitute the offence.*"

The Government of India have gone to great lengths to prove that these people have not been prosecuted because of their political opinions. They argue that several people may have Communist or Republican opinions, they may hold ideas for the complete separation of India from the British Empire, but "the

offence of criminal conspiracy is complete as soon as two or more persons agree to do or cause to be done an illegal act, or an act which is not illegal by illegal means. It is immaterial whether the illegal act is the ultimate object of such an agreement or is merely incidental to that object. For this purpose of Section 121-A, it is not necessary that any act of illegal omission shall take place in pursuance of the conspiracy. The agreement in itself is enough to constitute the offence."

Judge Sulaiman added: "It cannot be too clearly stated that in this case the Government has not prosecuted anyone for his opinions. The most serious part of the charge—which as regards a large majority of the accused has been proved—is that the accused have endeavoured to put their opinions into practice; the inevitable result of their action is that they have brought themselves within the scope of Section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code".

If this judgment is allowed to stand then the mere fact that the Indian workers and peasants thought and acted politically in unison would actually amount to conspiracy. The ruling class fears nothing more than the conscious organisation on a political basis of the great majority of the 350,000,000 suppressed Indian people.

The savage sentences passed upon the prisoners in January, 1933 were to be an object lesson for those who dared to follow in the foot-steps of the accused.

They have tried to terrorise the workers and peasants of India by Conspiracy cases, Trades Dispute Acts, Public Safety Acts, Bombay and Calcutta Hooligan Acts—each and all, however, have failed to crush the ever-growing resistance of the workers and peasants to unparalleled exploitation, neither can they wipe out the struggle for complete national independence.

The many protests and widespread indignation expressed in many countries forced British Imperialism to reduce these savage sentences, and in the smugness of heart so dear to the British in the face of the world, Judge Sulaiman stated:

## **Reformation of the Offender**

“It is commonplace to observe that the theory of punishment is based upon (a) the protection of the public, (b) the prevention of crime, and (c) the reformation of the offender. But even commonplaces require restatement occasionally as in practice these principles are sometimes forgotten.

“In the case of political offences, arising out of the beliefs of the accused, severe sentences defeat their object. In practice such sentences confirm the offenders in their beliefs and create other offenders, thus increasing the evil and the danger to the public.

“We are satisfied that the sentences imposed in this case by the Trial Court are calculated to defeat the purpose of punishment. We hope that the sentences we impose will have the opposite effect. If they do not, and the present offenders prove incorrigible, it may be necessary in the public interest to curtail their activities for lengthy periods.”

Judge Sulaiman in his judgment stated:

“It is not now disputed that a Communist International exists in Moscow, nor is it disputed that there is a Communist Party of Great Britain. It is equally admitted that a Communist Party of India was formed and existed in British India.

“It is convenient to divide the twenty-seven accused into four groups:

1. Members of the Communist Party of India.
2. Members of the Communist Party of Great Britain.
3. Communists by conviction but did not become members of the Communist Party of India.
4. Political workers belonging to either the Peasants' and Workers' Associations or Trade Unions or the Congress, who deny that they have ever belonged to any Communist organisation or joined in any conspiracy.

The Court ordered the sentences to be reduced as follows:

*	<i>Original Sentence</i>			<i>High Court Decision</i>		
	1. Muzaffar Ahmad	Transportation for life		3 years' rigorous imprsmt.		
	1. Dange ... ..	12 years' transportation.		3	"	"
	1. Usmani ... ..	10	"	3	"	"
	2. Spratt ... ..	12	"	2	"	"
	1. Ghate ... ..	12	"	1	"	"
	1. Joglekar ... ..	12	"	1	"	"
	1. Nimbkar ... ..	12	"	1	"	"
	2. Bradley ... ..	10	"	1	"	"
	1. Mirajkar ... ..	10	"	1	"	"
	1. Sohan Singh Josh	7	"	1	"	"
	1. Majid ... ..	7	"	1	"	"
	3. Goswami ... ..	7	"	1	"	"
	3. Chakravarti ...	4 years' rigorous imprsmt.		7 months	"	"
	1. Ajodhia Prasad...	5 years' transportation.		Conviction maintained, but released forthwith from jail ( <i>see below</i> )		
	3. P. C. Joshi ...	5	"	"		
	3. Basak ... ..	4 years' rigorous imprsmt.		"		
	1. Adhikari ... ..	5 years' transportation		"		
	1. Shams-ul-Huda...	3 years' rigorous imprsmt.		"		
	4. Desai ... ..	5 years' transportation		Acquitted		
	3. Hutchinson ...	4 years' rigorous imprsmt.		"		
	3. Mitra ... ..	4	"	"		
	4. Jhabwala ... ..	4	"	"		
	4. Sehgal ... ..	4	"	"		
	4. Kasle ... ..	3	"	"		
	4. Gauri Shankar ...	3	"	"		
	4. Kadam ... ..	3	"	"		
	4. Alve ... ..	3	"	"		

\* Denotes group in which the Court thought fit to place them.

By such acquittals and drastic reductions of sentence on the individuals accused imperialism, standing exposed in the face of the indignation of the international working-class, sought to cover up its tracks, and to re-establish confidence in its system of justice; that is to say, to disguise in the face of world opinion the class character of its justice. By such methods British Imperialism hoped to destroy the world interest in the case, and thereby carry on unhindered, its anti-working-class campaign—likewise its campaign against all who dare to organise the great struggle for National Independence.

## The Meerut Sentences

**R. Page Arnot**

The Meerut prisoners have been sentenced. After nearly four years in the stifling jail of Meerut, held without bail and tried without jury, they receive sentences of transportation for life, for twelve years, for ten years.

What Devil's Island meant in the calendar of French Imperialism, what northern-most Siberia meant in the record of the Tsardom, that transportation has meant in the annals of British India. The penal settlements, and of these the Andaman Islands are the most used and the best known, are a bye-word for the horrors inflicted on their inmates, fever-ridden swamps, where disease and death commute the Government sentences of long-term imprisonment.

These men had dared to help in the organisation of trade unions, they had dared to lead mass strikes and to develop the class character of the workers' struggle in India. Through their efforts and through the lessons of the strike they led, the Indian workers were rapidly over-coming the weaknesses of the earlier period and as a consequence were growing increasingly conscious of themselves as a class, and had taken the first steps to independent struggle and leadership of the whole struggle of the Indian masses.

For this the vengeance of Imperialism falls upon them in this series of savage sentences:

Muzaffar Ahmad, Vice-President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, already sentenced to four years' imprisonment in the Cawnpore conspiracy trial of 1924, is sentenced to transportation for life.

Philip Spratt, executive member of the All-India Trade Union Congress, active in trade union work and in the

co-operative movement when in England, is sentenced to transportation for twelve years.

S. V. Ghate, Vice-President of the Bombay Municipal Workers' Union, and in 1927 appointed Assistant Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress—transportation for twelve years.

K. N. Joglekar, organising secretary, G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union—transportation for twelve years.

R. S. Nimbkar, President, Bombay Oil Co.'s Employees Union, Secretary, Bombay Trades Council—transportation for twelve years.

S. A. Dange, General Secretary of the Girni Kamgar Union (which lead the six months' Bombay cotton strike of 1928), and Assistant Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress—transportation for twelve years.

B. F. Bradley, formerly of the London District Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, member of the Executive Council of the Girni Kamgar Union, and Treasurer of the Joint Strike Committee during the Bombay cotton strike—transportation for ten years.

S. S. Mirajkar, Secretary of the British India Steam Navigation Co. Staff Union—transportation for ten years.

S. Usmani, delegate to the All-India Trade Union Congress, previously sentenced in the 1924 Cawnpore trial—transportation for ten years.

P. C. Joshi, Editor of *Kranti Kari* and Secretary of United Provinces Workers' and Peasants' Party—transportation for seven years.

D. Goswami, Organiser of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union—seven years' transportation.

Abdul Majid, left India to fight for the Khilafat in 1920, and visited Russia—seven years' transportation.

G. M. Adhikari, a doctor of engineering, M. G. Desai, an Indian journalist; S. S. Josh, President of the first All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party in December, 1928; A. Prasad—all prominent workers in the Indian Labour Movement—transportation for five years.



Those who received four years' rigorous imprisonment were: G. Chakravarty, leader of the Kharagpur Railway strike, official of the East India Railway Union; R. R. Mitra, General Secretary of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union; Gopal Basak, official of the Bengal Textile Union; Lester Hutchinson, Editor of the *New Spark*, after the arrest of the others elected to an official position in the Girni Kamgar Union; S. H. Jhabwalla, General Secretary of the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union (with 41,000 members); K. N. Sehgal, member of the All-India Congress Committee.

Those sentenced to three years, rigorous imprisonment were: S. Huda, Secretary of the Transport Workers' Union of Bengal; A. A. Alwe, President of the Girni Kamgar Union; R. Kasle, official of the Girni Kamgar Union; Gourakshanker, member of the Workers' and Peasants' Party; L. R. Khadam; prominent worker in the Labour Movement.

Three were acquitted, while in the case of another, D. R. Thengdi, pioneer of the Indian Trade Union Movement and a veteran Nationalist, British imperialism was cheated of its victim by the old man's death in prison.

When the news of these dreadful sentences was received in Bombay, the Girni Kamgar Union called a strike in protest. It was a sign that the cotton workers of Bombay, who get neither insurance benefit nor P.A.C. relief, for whom to strike means to face starvation, understood very well that the right of trade union organisation is at stake.

The issue is nothing less than this, as indeed, is indicated by the list of whom the prisoners are, whether the capitalists are to be allowed to root out trade unionism in India.

This is not how the prosecution put it. They charged the prisoners, in the portentous language of the Indian Penal Code, that they conspired to deprive the King-Emperor of the Sovereignty of British India.

This was accompanied by a long rigmarole about the Communist International, which blossomed out in the speech of the prosecuting counsel into the statement that the object of the

accused "was, in effect, to substitute for the Government of His Majesty, the Government of Mr. Stalin, as he is now called."

But in the whole three years and ten months of the trial, from arrest to sentence, not a single overt act, which could deprive the King-Emperor of his Sovereignty, could be proved against them. Their "offence" was to have stimulated, encouraged and led the fight against the terrible oppressions and poverty imposed by British Imperialism upon the toiling masses of India. This is "conspiracy against the King."

On the other hand, for the 1928 cotton strike alone the prosecution produced *seven hundred* of the usual garbled police reports of speeches, to prove the "incitement of antagonism between Capital and Labour."

That is to say, the prisoners were sentenced for doing just what every fighting trade unionist in this country is found doing during a strike, and for saying just what is daily said in our trade union branches. The Meerut trial therefore is in the first place an attack on the workers' right of trade union organisation. The sentences strike at the root of trade unionism. the international working-class, and above all, the British working-class, is bound to fight against these sentences and not to cease the struggle until the sentences have been cancelled and the prisoners released.

Trade unionism in India in the real sense begins with the Meerut prisoners. The name, trade union, had not existed before 1918, and the meagre trade unions that grew up after that date, were vessels without contents; not trade union organisations, but trade union offices, in which sat middle-class philanthropists and lawyers, generals without an army and without an enemy. In a word, this trade union movement in name only, tolerated by the government as harmless and even useful, became the prey of every sort of adventurer and opportunist who used it as a jumping-off ground for a seat in the Legislative Assembly or a post under the government.

The Meerut prisoners brought life and fight into these unions, increased their membership and organised the trade union movement in trades hitherto unorganised. The great strikes at the end of the war had thrown up forms of trade union organisation

which were little more than strike committees and these had vanished like the transient organisations of the early strike movement in Great Britain.

The Meerut trial and sentences represent therefore the attempt of British Imperialism to strangle at birth a great historical working-class movement, in a country whose population comprises one-sixth of mankind.

British Imperialism has its reasons for this. Indian trade unions have to protect workers against the most miserable conditions, of wages (1d. an hour), hours (limited in 1922 to a 60-hour week), and general working conditions. If Marx could tell how the millocracy of England used up three generations of cotton operatives in one lifetime, an even worse tale must be told in India during the "beneficent" rule of the sahibs, when the expectation of life has fallen within a generation from 30 to 22, or less than half the average expectation of life in England.

The fight of an organised Indian working-class against such conditions as these would threaten the very basis of Imperialism, the super-profits on which the British capitalists fatten.

The Indian working-class could not be bribed as were sections of the English working-class in the later nineteenth century by crumbs from the rich man's banquet of super-profits, for they themselves are the source of super-profits. The Indian trade unions, if real, as the Meerut prisoners were making them, were bound to be of the same sort as the Chartist trade unions, and could never sink into the torpor and friendly society condition of the British craft unions in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

But the parallel with Chartism is insufficient. The Indian trade union movement is being born in the epoch of Imperialism, amid wars and revolutions, in the country that is a blazing furnace of colonial revolt against Imperialism.

Born in these circumstances, the Indian trade unions are bound to be but a first step. The Indian proletariat once aware of itself as a class, enters on a road when of necessity it is bound to organise trade unions, to organise its own independent working-class party, to take the lead of the peasantry, to lead the whole national struggle for emancipation, and to find its goal (though not its final

goal) in the overthrow of Imperialism, the independence of India, and the complete destruction of the feudal-imperialist regime.

British Imperialism recognises its deadliest enemy in the Indian working-class and for this reason, tries to crush its advance by a reign of terror and sentences of transportation.

For this reason, too, because there is no reconciling of the interests of the Indian workers with the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, all other interests and all parties are bound to take up their positions on one side or other. The British Labour Party, and the Trade Union Congress General Council, abandon their humanitarian pose when colonial super-profits are at stake (for they share in these super-profits) and condemn the Meerut prisoners, only blaming the Government for not finishing them off more quickly. A sentiment with which the Tory Secretary of State for India cordially agreed, "this trial has gone on far too long," as he said when he took over this hangman's job from the Labour Government.

The pharisees of the General Council, celebrating this year the centenary of the Dorchester Labourers (sentenced to seven years' transportation a hundred years ago for organising trade unions in England), would not raise a finger to release the men who were organising trade unions in India.

On the other hand, the organisation of the Indian capitalists, the Indian National Congress, when faced by the sharpening class-struggle, abandons its opposition to the "Satanic" British Raj, and its representative, Gandhi, signed a pact with the Viceroy which released 50,000 political captives, but kept the Meerut prisoners fast in their gaol.

The Meerut prisoners' trial and sentences raise the whole question of the right of workers to organise trade unions in a colonial country, where the masses are held down by naked force. For British Imperialism it is too dangerous, and for Gandhi and Lansbury also. But for British workers it is an elementary duty, which they cannot fail to carry through, to support the fight of working-class organisation in India, and to join with the Indian workers in their struggle against British Imperialism.

It is not only a duty: it is a necessity. Not only is it true that a nation that oppresses another cannot itself be free; but the same imperialist class that is oppressing India, is oppressing and

robbing the workers of this country by wage-cuts and speed-up, tariffs and taxes, is taking the bread out of the mouths of the workers' children, depriving them of the benefits of education, insurance and all other social services, and casting into gaol Tom Mann or any other leader of working-class revolt. The railwaymen facing a wage-cut, the busmen on strike against speed-up, the Lancashire workers suffering under the Midland Agreement, are fighting the same class that would deny the Indian workers the right to organise.

But the deepest significance of the Meerut Trial and the reason for the extreme ferocity of the sentences, is that the representatives of the Indian masses and the representatives of the British working-class were carrying on a united struggle against British Imperialism. For a hundred and fifty years British Capitalism has been a parasite on India, sucking its life-blood. For a hundred and fifty years every device of imperialist propaganda has been used to sunder the exploited of India from the exploited of Britain.

It is the glory of the Meerut prisoners that for the first time on such a charge representatives of the exploited classes of India and Britain stood together. Their stand is a symbol of that unity of the British working-class with the masses of the British Empire which alone can destroy British Imperialism.

The Meerut prisoners, Englishmen and Indians in the dock together, destroyed once and for all the jingo picture of "black men" versus "white men," of "Asiatics against Europeans" and showed the true line of cleavage in a fight of the oppressed of both nations against the oppressors. To obtain their release, therefore, must be the object of both British and Indian workers. But it is the British Governments—Tory, Labour and National—that have kept them in prison. It is the British Government which is responsible for the sentence. The biggest responsibility lies with the British working-class to secure their release, by nation-wide agitation in every organisation, in every kind of meeting.

The feeling of horror and indignation that was felt in the middle of January when the sentences were announced must grow into a powerful agitation that will force open the prison doors, annul these venomous sentences, and establish the workers' right to organisation in India.

# The Class Struggle in India

**Clemens Dutt**

## The Meerut Trial

The trial of thirty-one Indian working-class leaders at Meerut occupies the centre of the political stage in India to-day. Attempts may be made to disregard it or belittle its importance (the *Daily Herald*, more shameless than the capitalist Press, at first suppressed all mention of it), but it remains the most important event of the period in India, giving the truest indication of what is happening there and throwing the clearest light on the alignment of class forces at the present time. All the vague chattering about strained relations between "India" and "Britain", and the need for "statesmanship" in the Labour Government's handling of this delicate problem, all the conjecture and wrangling over the possibilities of the Simon Commission Report, all the intrigue and manoeuvring in the Indian puppet legislatures, all the commotion over Hindu-Moslem differences, serves only to hide the reality of the situation and pales almost into irrelevance before the issues comprehended in this signal of the coming mass conflict with British Imperialism. The Meerut trial reveals and expresses the new stage of acuter class antagonisms in India, it marks the ripening of the strength and consciousness of the Indian proletariat, it tests and exposes the insincerity and cowardice of the Indian bourgeois nationalists, and it provides the admission by British Imperialism itself of their own recognition of the greatest threat and danger to themselves.

The big strike movement in India during the last eighteen months has been only one sign of the new period characterised by the emergence of the proletariat as an independent political force.

The Meerut trial marks a further stage in which the centre of gravity of the anti-imperialist struggle and the main line of imperialist attack definitely shifts from the bourgeois nationalist movement to the proletarian movement. British imperialism seeks to reduce its enemy to impotence with one blow. But just as the "Bolshevist Conspiracy" trial at Cawnpore, during the period of the Labour Government in 1924, denoted the beginning and not the end of revolutionary consciousness and Communist sympathy among the Indian workers, so now the Meerut trial means, not the extinction of the Communist movement but a turning point from which the period of the struggle of the Indian working-class for leadership in the mass movement against imperialism takes on a new and definite character.

The Cawnpore trial was a small thing in itself, in spite of its significance and its results. There were only four victims and they were all young men whose association with the labour movement in India had only just begun. In the present trial not only do three of the former victims again appear, and this time with considerably greater standing as recognised leaders of the organised workers' movement (Comrade S.A. Dange, for example, is the present assistant secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress and General Secretary of the large militant union of textile workers in Bombay that has conducted the strike there), but the majority of the arrested men are prominent leaders of working-class organisations, most of them officials of trade unions, and all of them more or less directly associated with mass movements of workers or peasants.

It is no accident that the men now on trial are so closely identified with the strike movement. It is precisely the fact that they are not theorists or conspirators but the actual leaders of the proletarian revolt against intolerable conditions of exploitation that is at once the reason for their arrest and the proof that the intention will be frustrated. For the movement among the workers has already too deep a foundation to be destroyed by the arrest of its leaders. It is only necessary, in this connection, to refer to the events in Bombay. Not only was practically every member of the Executive Committee of the Girni Kamgar Union, which was leading the textile strike, included in the arrests, but the capitalist Press openly noted and commented that the arrests were made

just prior to and in preparation for the publication of the Government Fawcett Committee Report on the issues in the textile dispute, a report which was of such a nature that it was likely to provoke a further strike. This strike actually took place in spite of the arrests.

### **British Imperialist Policy**

The policy underlying the Meerut case has, however, a much wider basis than merely the attempt to stifle industrial unrest. The Meerut arrests are only one of the most significant items in a general offensive of British Imperialism, characterised by the display of despotic brutality and by a policy of ruthless repression directed first and foremost against the working-class and mass movement rather than against the nationalists.

While the bourgeois nationalists were crowing aloud at their bravery in declaring for independence and a "life and death struggle" against British autocracy, and boasting of the heavy attack that would be made against them, British Imperialism has almost contemptuously disregarded them (Gandhi is fined one shilling and six pence for his defiance of British law in burning foreign cloth in Calcutta) and struck determinedly at its chief enemy. It is a sign of the times that most of the repressive measures recently forced through and most of the vindictive punishments meted out by the courts have been devoted to decapitating and undermining in all possible ways the rising mass movement. Particularly, the object has been to crush the alarming growth of the proletarian revolt before the peasant millions could be set into motion.

The weakness of international labour has played a great part in facilitating the attack against the workers in India. British Imperialism has so many fronts on which to fight that its success on one immediately enables it to adopt stronger measures on another. The temporary defeat of the Chinese revolution, and especially the "industrial peace" surrender of the British workers and their obedient support for the policy of Imperialism in India, participation in the Simon Commission, etc., have been important factors in making possible the present campaign of terror.



Additional security has been furnished by the successful destruction of the dangerous development of independence in Afghanistan, by the obtaining of allies among the most reactionary feudal elements in India with the proposal to create an Indian "Ulster" out of the so-called "Native States," and by the absence of effective opposition from the Indian bourgeois nationalist movement.

The Indian bourgeois nationalists, their fears of the mass movement being greater than their opposition to foreign Imperialism, have retreated in proportion as the proletariat has advanced and they have been only half-hearted in their resistance to the imperialist attack. They allowed the passage of the Trades Disputes Act, and even the Public Safety Bill was only rejected by the intervention of the President in the Assembly. The Government is sufficiently secure in its power to be able to take such a step as the postponement of the Indian elections without great outcry.

The plans of Imperialism have been well-laid. After the challenge of the Simon Commission, which provoked the nationalists to do their worst and exposed it as nothing so terrible after all, the imperialist rulers proceeded to deal with the greater menace. The brutal suppression of strikes last year, by victimisation of leaders, free use of police and military forces, wholesale arrests and imposition of heavy sentences on various charges (as in the case of the Bauria jute workers and the ten-year sentences on the leaders of the South Indian railway strike), prepared the way for the campaign against the "Communist menace", in which even the Viceroy was made a propagandist, and the subsequent legislation and "conspiracy trial". At the same time less direct means have also been employed in order to guide working-class activity into safe channels, notably by encouragement of the reformists and, particularly, the appointment of the Whitley Royal Commission on Indian Labour.

These plans are being carried forward and even extended by the British Labour Government. The "conspiracy of silence" on India during the election was a guarantee, if any were needed, given by the Labour Party, that they would faithfully carry on the work of

Imperialism if they were given the responsibility. Their Government is still only a few days old, yet it has already implemented its pledges by adding another victim to the Meerut trial, a young English journalist about whom there could be no pretence that he was an agent of the Communist International, but who, at the sight of the Government terror in Bombay, had dared to raise his voice in protest and come out in defence of the workers. It has continued the arrest of workers, intensified repression in Bombay, and further attacked the few working-class organs still being published.

### **Class-Conscious Nationalism**

The events of the last two years have provided an interesting test of the class alignment of the different sections of the bourgeois nationalist movement. Its main representative, the Indian National Congress, although sometimes termed "extremist" in comparison with the loyalists and liberals who, in the main, support British rule, is dominated by the bigger bourgeois elements, but contains a mixture of elements in its membership ranging from big landlords and capitalists down to petty clerks and pauperised intellectuals. It has very few proletarians in its ranks. The heterogeneity of its social composition has given rise to a complicated variety of tendencies within it, but the struggle between them becomes more and more concentrated round the chief cleavage—for the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie or for the proletariat and peasantry. The reconciling of these interests is becoming increasingly difficult, and the radical section is being driven to follow the lead of the proletariat and even to the support of Communism, often in spite of itself.

Taken as a whole, the bourgeois nationalist movement is on the decline, because it can no longer lead the struggle of the whole nation, and it is adopting a more definitely class-conscious hostile attitude towards the proletarian struggle. A year and a half ago, the wave of indignation against the Simon Commission, seemed to have put an end to the decline which followed the collapse of non-co-operation in 1922. The Madras Session of the National

Congress, in December, 1927, reflected the new orientation of the national struggle, consciously directed against Imperialism, as seen in the resolution for complete independence, the resolution against British Imperialism and imperialist war preparations and the support given to the League against Imperialism. We pointed out at the time, however, that these resolutions were adopted by the old leaders rather as a means of holding the allegiance of the somewhat rebellious rank and file and of preventing the leadership being taken out of their hands, than from any intention of prosecuting a revolutionary policy.

The truth of this has now been borne out. The masses have not been drawn into the Congress; even against the Simon Commission the severest limits were set on mass demonstrations. The heralded rejuvenation of the bourgeois nationalist movement has come to nothing. There has not even been a marked improvement in the dwindling numerical strength of the Congress ranks. Some figures recently given to Gandhi, on the occasion of his visit, by the Congress organisation of the Nellore district, north of Madras, are fairly typical. In 1921, they had 10,000 members and collected nearly 16,000 rupees for the Congress funds. In 1922, after the debacle, their membership dropped to about 4,000 and their collections to 2,000 rupees. Since then their finance has dwindled year by year. In 1926, it was 445 rupees, in 1927 there was a slight increase, but by 1928 it was down to the lowest level of 278 rupees, and the membership was about 250.

In the face of the aggressive attitude of the British Government, there has been forced a confession of the unreality of the anti-imperialist gestures of the Congress. Already, at the Calcutta session last December, the independence resolution was virtually abrogated, and although the actual adoption of Dominion status as a goal was accompanied by the most extravagant threats of mass civil disobedience in 1930, not even their sponsors took these seriously. The Independence League, which started with such a flourish of trumpets, is practically dead. It has carried out no mass activities, it has hardly held a meeting. Its president, Srinivasa Iyengar, has resigned from it, and has jumped straight into the camp of the liberal Right Wing, raising anew the old cry

of the "responsive co-operators," who left the Congress in 1925 and 1926, that it was necessary that Congress members in the Legislative Councils should be free to accept Ministerships under the dyarchy system. This demand was put forward by Madras representatives at the All-India Congress Committee in May, 1927, and was only dropped because of the postponing of the elections by the Government.

The reversion to Liberalism was implicit in the acceptance of the Nehru Report, based as it was on the voluntary limitation of the demands of the Congress to the maximum acceptable to the Right Wing nationalists outside. On this basis some of the latter have rejoined or been recruited into the Congress, and proposals were being actively made for common action in the elections. In Bombay a committee was appointed which included alongside of the Congress leaders, such men as Jinnah (the Muslim leader of the "independents" in the Assembly), and Jayaker (one of those who left the Congress on the "responsive co-operation" issue). It is not unlikely that the old reactionary, Pundit Malaviya, will be chosen as next year's Congress president.

Most significant of all is the growing sharpness of the anti-working-class attitude adopted by even many of the younger leaders. The talk about support of the mass movement and labour organisation remains as much a phrase as ever. In spite of all the pious mention of it in innumerable speeches and articles, there has not been even the simplest practical step, such as support for the Bombay strike. The debate on the Public Safety Bill in the Assembly, which became a discussion about Communism, was practically an invitation by the nationalists to the Government to prosecute the alleged Communists.

The attitude towards the Meerut arrests, as expressed at a number of provincial conferences of Congress organisations, has been revealing. A high-sounding Defence Committee was appointed, but very little has yet been done in giving concrete assistance. Its President, Dr. Ansari, reported:—

In spite of issue of appeal and a thousand letters sent to individuals, the response has been very poor ..... . Rich people had failed in their duty. Now it was for the middle-class and the poorer people to come to the rescue. (Liberty, May 19, 1929.)

At the important Bengal Provincial Conference in March, 1929, the President, S.C. Bose, one of the younger "independence" leaders, who led the fight against Gandhi at the Calcutta Congress Session, used the Meerut trial to deduce the need for suppressing the difference between revolutionaries and reformists in the Indian working-class movement. Incidentally, in the same speech he put in a plea for Fascism as well as for Socialism. He announced that the "lessons" of the Meerut arrests were as follows:—

- (1) It is necessary to remove all causes of friction between the different sections of labour.
- (2) The Whitley Labour Commission ought to be boycotted.
- (3) There ought to be closer co-operation between the labour movement and the Congress.

It is worthy of note that earlier in the year, the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee turned down a resolution calling for support of the working-class struggle on the grounds that they were opposed to "class war."

### **The Talk of Socialism**

In opposition to the anti-working-class attitude of the big leaders, there is an important Left Wing in the Congress which reacts under the influence of the pressure of the mass movement. The conflict between the two wings is becoming more and more definitely a class cleavage. To a certain extent, the Left Wing in the Congress has shared in the repression exercised against the proletarian movement owing to its sympathy with the latter. It is being pulled in two different directions, representing as it does the field of battle in the fight for leadership between the proletarian and bourgeois elements.

As a result of the pressure of the mass movement, a large part of the Left Wing has taken its stand under the banner of "Socialism," more often expressed as a vague ideal than as connected with any concrete action on behalf of the class-struggle. The young Jawaharlal Nehru, Secretary of the National Congress and President of the Trade Union Congress, has led the way in this propagation of socialism in the abstract. The talk of socialism has been particularly marked in the organised

Nationalist Youth Movement, which has developed rapidly of late but is confined to middle-class and petty-bourgeois elements.

To a considerable extent, the talk about socialism on the part of the leaders represents only the same sort of radical claptrap as is talked about independence, and has no greater significance. At the All-Parties Convention which adopted the Nehru Report, the ultra-reformist president of the All-India T.U.C. put forward an agreed resolution of that body in favour of a socialist constitution. The representative of the Political Sufferers' Conference (the organisation of political prisoners) also declared for socialism but added "much as we feel strongly on this subject, we do not propose to hamper the work of this Congress."

One of the outstanding socialist declarations is the resolution passed almost unanimously last April by the United Provinces Political Conference. It runs:—

The following recommendation be made to the All-India Congress Committee. That, in the opinion of the Conference, the great poverty and misery of the Indian people are due, not only to foreign exploitation of India, but also to the economic structure of society which alien rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. In order, therefore, to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequities that subsist under it. As a first step, it is essential that provision be made for a living wage for every worker and to tax heavily all unearned incomes, and for peasants to have adequate land and be protected from interference of middlemen.

It is interesting to notice that this resolution, *minus the last sentence*, was passed by the A.I.C.C. in May, 1929.

At the Sind Conference, in May, 1929, the President was Mr. Chaman Lal, who is able to combine a reputation for extremism with securing such marks of official favour as being appointed on to the Government Whitley Commission. He spoke in favour of socialism, and proposed co-operative purchase of the land which will be made available for cultivation by the new

Sukkur barrage. The *Bombay Chronicle*, the leading organ of bourgeois nationalism in Bombay, has an interesting comment. It begins its leading article with the words:—

Socialism is in the air. For months past, socialistic principles have been preached in India at various conferences, especially those of peasants and workmen.

It sees no hope of realisation, even of Chaman Lal's "mild Socialistic" scheme, but it remarks with great frankness:—

It is, however, good for the classes to assure the masses that they would not continue to be exploited under Swaraj.

After this candid confession, it considers the practical application and finds it in:—

carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress.

That programme, Khaddar in particular, is nothing if not socialistic in the best sense of the term.

These comments are representative of the nationalist Press. We have here a curious phenomenon where the representatives of bourgeois interests are found supporting a typical example of what Marx called "feudal socialism". In general, translation of socialist aims into practical support of a reactionary programme is inevitable when the nationalists who profess them are not ready to take action in support of the class-struggle actually being waged by the workers and peasants.

### **The Working-Class Struggle**

In spite of the hammer blows directed against it, the Indian proletariat is not only unsubdued, but is still advancing. The fight of the Bombay textile workers has the most tremendous significance for the future. It shows in the clearest form the development towards independent class leadership of the working-class struggle which is the most important tendency now arising.

Through bitter experience, amid incredible hardships, the Bombay workers are winning through to taking full charge of their own struggle. In 1924, it was almost surprising when some of them refused to accept the counsel of the middle-class nationalists who negotiated on their behalf. In 1929, they have not

only repudiated the reformist trade union leaders, but they have built up their own organisation with a factory committee basis. All efforts to smash them have failed. They have scorned the manoeuvres of the reformists and deserted the always stagnant textile union, run by the reformist General Secretary of the T.U.C., which has now hardly 6,000 members. The Bombay riots represented a provocation on a large scale, which failed to entangle them. The repression, arrest of all their leaders, drafting in of troops, introduction of "curfew" and martial law has failed to intimidate them. They have carried on the strike against all odds, and yet they were ready also to levy themselves for the support of the Meerut prisoners.

The second feature of the present period is the growth of political consciousness and emancipation from the political domination of bourgeois nationalism. In spite of illiteracy, isolation, & c., the workers are adopting Communist, revolutionary working-class aims. Their demonstrations are being made with such slogans as "Down with Imperialism" and "A Soviet Republic for India". The march of the workers to the Congress Session in Calcutta last December, when they were met by the lathis of the Congress "volunteers", whom they brushed aside to take possession of the meeting tent, was a significant sign of the contrast between the two movements.

Clearer political consciousness brings also a sharper fight with reformism. When the Trade Union Congress leaders, Joshi and Bakhale, come out openly as strike-breakers in the present Bombay mill strike, their real role can no longer be misunderstood. The trade union reformist leaders work hand in hand with the nationalists for industrial peace. For some time past, such notorious agents of British reformism as Kirk, in Madras, and Indians like Shiva Rao, with the encouragement and support of the British T.U.C., have called for the expulsion of "reds" from the trade unions in India. Naturally, they look almost with complacency on the Meerut arrests and use it to further their propaganda.

The nationalist attitude is to seek to prevent "class war" in the interests of Indian industry. The following quotation from the



leading article of the foremost nationalist paper in Calcutta, on the treacherous settlement by S.C. Bose, of the strike of the Tata iron and steel workers last year, is a frank admission of this viewpoint. It remarks:—

It was the recognition of the importance of a flourishing national industry struggling for a place under the sun that induced S.C. Bose to sacrifice much of his valuable time in promoting cordial relations between labour and capital at Jamshedpur. (*Liberty*, May 18, 1929.)

The alliance of British and Indian reformism is becoming still more clear. British imperialism seeks to crush the struggle of the Indian workers, not for the sake of Indian industry, but because of the revolutionary menace to British imperialism involved in it. In their actions they are ably seconded by the General Council of the British T.U.C., as well as by the Labour Party, as seen in the recent falsified and anti-working-class communications issued by the T.U.C.

Against all these enemies, the Indian workers are engaged in a severe and difficult fight. The path towards building up their independent organisations in alliance with the peasants' movement is beset with obstacles. The campaign of terrorism has succeeded in breaking down the organisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party. Already, before the arrests, it was showing signs of weakness owing to the variety of class interests it attempted to represent and the mixture of semi-reformist and class-conscious elements within it. The attack against it has shown that it is not a mass party and does not fulfil the needs of the proletariat. It is inevitable that in spite of the repression, and partly because if it, the workers will advance towards the formation of a firmly-based revolutionary Communist Party.

It is not possible to deal here with the development of the peasant movement. Numerous partial struggles and other signs point to the approach of a critical situation. At the present time, the workers in India are advancing in the face of a world of enemies. When they succeed in allying themselves with the peasants, they will have a support which will make them irresistible.

## **Statement by a Legal Expert: The Meerut Conspiracy Case**

**By a Barrister-at-Law**

### **The Arrests**

On the 20th March, 1929, thirty-one men were arrested in India, and subsequently charged with the offence of "conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of India." Another man was arrested three months later and charged with the others. Three of the arrested men were English; the remainder were Indians.

It is important, first of all, to have some idea of who these men were, and secondly, how it was that they came to be arrested and charged with this political offence.

The three Englishmen were Philip Spratt, B.F. Bradley and Lester Hutchinson. Spratt is a graduate of Cambridge University who had gone out to India to investigate working-class conditions and had become an Executive Member of the All-India T.U.C. Bradley, has been a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union in this country for many years and was Vice-President of the All-India Trade Union Congress and of the Great India Peninsular Railwaymen's Union. Hutchinson was a Journalist and Editor of a left-wing paper; he was arrested in June 1929, a few days after he had been elected Vice-President of the famous Bombay Textile Union, the G.K.U. (Girni Kamgar Union).

Nearly all the Indians were prominent trade unionists. They include Dange and Ghate, the two assistant secretaries of the All-India T.U.C. both of whom were prominent trade unionists in Bombay and members of the Girni Kamgar Union. They also included Joglekar and Nimbkar who, besides being well-known Congressmen, were also executive members of the G.K.U. and of the Bombay Railwaymen's Union. Alwe and Kasle were

respectively the President and Vice-President of the G K U. and were actual mill workers. Goswami and Mitra were officials of the Bengal Railwaymen's Union and in 1928 helped to organise the two successful strikes of the Calcutta Scavengers' Union.

And so the list could be expanded. The remaining accused, journalists, teachers and lawyers included among them, were all connected with some form of political working-class activity. One died in prison, Thengdi, the veteran nationalist and past President of the All-India T.U.C. The four years between arrest and judgment proved too long for his tired body if not for his young and vigorous spirit.

### **The Condition of the Worker in India**

The charge against these men was in substance political, but in reality the charge was nothing more or less than a weapon to silence the attack they were conducting against the vile and abominable conditions Capitalism imposes upon the workers in India.

The conditions in which the Indian worker lives and works are amongst the worst in the world. Although India is primarily an agricultural country and a producer of raw material, there are many industrial areas, particularly in Bengal where there are numbers of jute mills, and Bombay is the centre of the Indian Textile Industry. The Indian iron and steel trades are established, there are important coal-mines worked by both male and female labour. The country is covered with a network of railways employing a million workers, and which are, in fact, almost entirely owned and managed by the Government.

In 1927, A. A. Purcell and J. Hallsworth visited India as delegates from the British Trade Union Congress and in 1928 the T.U.C. published an interesting report by their two delegates, giving a graphic picture of the life of the Indian worker. On housing it says "*disgustingly bad conditions prevail generally so far as the working-classes are concerned.*" The figures of infantile mortality they quote are dreadful; in 1926, says the Director of Public Health, Bengal, 131,000 infants died in that Province less than a month after they were born, 119,000 died

between one month and twelve months; 60,000 were stillborn; and between 60,000 and 70,000 mothers died in childbirth.

Wages are extremely low. The Royal Commission on Indian Labour which visited India in 1930-31 estimated that the cost of living figure for the working-classes is between 37s. to 40s. *a month*, and this for rent, clothing and food. This makes no provision for furniture, sickness or accident. The report says with admirable moderation, *"these facts are best left to speak for themselves, and it is unnecessary to emphasise the general poverty they disclose."*

What wages do the workers receive since they can exist so cheaply? "All inquiries go to show," say Purcell and Hallsworth, "that the vast majority of workers in India do not receive more than 1s. per day—and, as a matter of fact, many cases have been quoted to us of daily rates in operation which descend to 3d. or 4d for women and 7d. or even less for men." The railways have a minimum wage; it is 16s. 6d. per month of twenty-six days. And the Government does not make any better employer than the private individual; in many ways it is one of the worst offenders. By reason of its ownership and management of the railways, salt mines, machine factories, and ordnance works it is probably the biggest individual employer of labour in the whole of India. The Royal Commission on Indian Labour has some interesting information on industrial conditions under the Government as capitalist. In dealing with the conditions in the Government-owned salt mines at Khewra, it comments on the employment of women underground for manual labour, the absence of any supervision and check upon the number of hours they work, and the condition under which the work is done. The following is an extract from its comments on the health of the worker.

"We were struck by the poor health of the miners and their Anæmia is prevalent." The Report continues "At the time of our visit conditions seemed to be much as this Report (a 1922 Report) presented them, and we are unable to find that any action had been taken on it. Health conditions in the mine are no more satisfactory . . . the inadequacy of the sanitary arrangements and the pollution of the atmosphere underground may be regarded as contributing to the low standard of health of the community."

Even in the East, notorious for its poverty and filth, such conditions inevitably arouse discontent and resentment in the working-classes. As industrialisation grows so does the class-consciousness of the worker. He sees more blatantly displayed the greed and ruthlessness of the possessing classes, and, with that discontent, so does the realisation of the necessity for united action become more and more apparent. Thus is trade unionism born. The Royal Commission on Labour in India, 1931, states: "The leading industries were yielding phenomenal profits, but wages lagged behind prices, and labour, so far from participating in the unprecedented prosperity, often found conditions harder than before. The world-wide uprising of labour consciousness extended to India, where for the first time the mass of industrial workers awoke to their disabilities, particularly in the matter of wages and hours and to the possibility of combination."

### **The Action the Government Does Take**

In India the true function of a Government within the capitalist states becomes clearly apparent. Its actions on behalf of the class it represents are clearly seen for what they are, because they correspond with its own actions as a direct employer of labour. The growth of working-class organisation is carefully studied. Various statutes and later ordinances which, designed ostensibly to combat the growing nationalist demand for independence serve as equally effective weapons against the working-classes, came into being and were used to limit and hamper the activities of the Indian Unions. An example in point was the Public Safety Bill under which the Government sought power to deport non-Indian Trade Union Organisers, and to prohibit the receipt of monies from workers' organisations abroad by the Indian Trade Unions and political organisations. The Indian legislatures refused to pass this bill, so to make it into law over their heads the Governors—who have dictatorial powers—issued ordinances to the same effect.

At the same time, the police, military and the magisterial courts were used as strike-breaking weapons, and, as in the last century

in England, the legal machine became a useful instrument in the suppression of strikes and the intimidation of strikers and their leaders. Injunctions and evictions, searches and confiscations, martial law and police raids, were the regular accompaniments of strikes.

Furthermore, the Government set-up at what must have been enormous expense a complete elaborate and efficient espionage system. One of the most remarkable features in the case we are considering is the use made by the Prosecution of copies of letters and documents obtained by the interception of correspondence between the prisoners and others, correspondence intercepted with the active co-operation of the Post Office both in India and in England. Judging by the volume of letters produced it seems probable that for at least three years before 1929 every letter received by prominent trade unionists in India must have been opened and photographed by the police.

### **The Workers Reply**

*The Labour Gazette*, published by the Bombay Government, gives the following figures of Indian strikes:—

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of disputes</i>	<i>No. of workers involved</i>	<i>No. of working- days lost</i>
1926	128	186,811	1,027,478
1927	122	131,655	2,012,270
1928	203	506,851	31,647,404
1929	141	532,061	12,165,691
1930	145	196,000	2,300,000

It is a curious coincidence that the majority of the leaders of the 1928 strikes found themselves in 1929 in the dock at Meerut, charged among other things with incitement of antagonism between capital and labour. That is the accusation brought against them by the Government of India. In 1931, however, the Royal Commission on Labour in India expressed the following opinion regarding the origin of strikes in India: "*But although workers may have been influenced by persons with Nationalist, Communist or Commercial ends to serve, we believe that there*

has rarely been a strike of any importance which has not been due entirely or largely to economic reasons." This opinion seems to exonerate the Meerut prisoners from responsibility for antagonism between capital and labour.

In 1928 the greatest strike in the history of the Indian Labour Movement occurred when 100,000 Bombay textile workers struck against reduced wages and "more looms". They were out for six months without pay and the strike was largely organised by the G.K.U. The workers finally returned to work on the old wages, but the question of working conditions was referred to a committee known as the Fawcett Committee.

There were other strikes. The Calcutta scavengers struck, and unsuccessfully. The Bengal Jute workers, and the East Indian Railway operatives were out. And their Unions grew, grew from the vile conditions and from the efforts of the prisoners. The employers in India feared this rising tide of industrial revolt. How did they combat it?

In March 1929 the Fawcett Committee was about to report and to publish the results of the enquiries into the conditions of the Bombay mill workers. Their report when it was published was in fact unfavourable to the workers, but it is significant that three days before the Committee's findings were made known every member of the Executive Committee of the new Girni Kamgar Union together with prominent members of other Trade Unions were arrested in various parts of the country and sent off in handcuffs to Meerut. These arrests deprived militant Trade Unionism of its leadership.

It is because the Prosecution was launched in these circumstances, because the prisoners are almost all militant trade union leaders, because of the emphasis laid by the Prosecution on the trade union activities of the prisoners—particularly strikes—that it is important to appreciate the growth of working-class organization amongst the industrial workers in India and the development of their fight against exploitation and oppression at the hands of their employers. The commencement of the *Prosecution of March 1929 is directly connected with the rapid growth in the resistance of the workers during 1928 and with the*

imminence of fresh industrial struggles just because of the recommendations of the Fawcett Committee.

### **The Nature of the Charge**

The prisoners were charged with conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of India. As we have seen, practically, the whole of the activities of the prisoners were trade union and industrial activities, and it therefore became necessary for the Prosecution to prove to the satisfaction of the court, if none else, that these activities were intended to be political. The only way this could be done was by alleging that these activities were part of a larger scheme on the part of the Communist International to overthrow, by means of the prisoners, the whole political system of India, and accordingly the conspirators were charged as conspirators with no less than sixty-three other bodies and individuals including the Third International and "*other persons known and unknown and not before the Court.*"

It was for this purpose that the Prosecution brought into the case any organization or person with leftwing tendencies and so in disfavour with the Government. In fact, it was only necessary for the prisoner to have in his possession a copy of Marx's *Capital* for the Prosecution to say that the whole of his activities were directed, not primarily to secure better wages and conditions for the Indian workers but an immediate and violent political revolution, against the existing Government of India.

### **Why not a Jury?**

The prisoners were tried at Meerut. Most of them lived, worked and were arrested in Bombay and Calcutta, but Meerut was chosen as the place of their trial.

The prisoners were not tried by jury. Had the prisoners been tried at Bombay or Calcutta they would have been entitled to a trial by jury. At Meerut they were not. The Government of India had good reason to fear for the success of the Prosecution if it had taken place before a jury. Juries in political cases are notoriously "unreliable". Two of the Meerut prisoners, Spratt and Mirajkar, were acquitted by juries in 1927 when they had been charged with sedition.



Naturally the Government did not draw attention to the fact that the criminal code enforced in the State where Meerut lies does not entitle the prisoners to a trial by jury. Rather, they attempted to establish that Meerut had been the seat of the conspiracy, a task which, bearing in mind that nearly all the strikes which had taken place had been in Calcutta and Bombay, seems a little difficult even for a Government Prosecution to establish successfully. All the Government had to rely upon was the fact that some public meetings had been held in Meerut (in which four only of the prisoners had from time to time taken part) and that letters between two of the alleged conspirators had been transmitted between them in Meerut. In fact, twenty-four of the prisoners had never been in Meerut.

That the court which tried the prisoners was not unaware of the disadvantages arising from a denial of the right to a trial by jury is evidenced by the following remarks. The Magistrate in the preliminary proceedings said, "Man is a political animal . . . justice in a case like this is more likely to be done by a trained judge than by a jury." The High Court were even more explicit. They said, "A jury might not take a judicial view." That, of course, is one of the principle faults of the jury system.

### **The Prisoners in Court**

The preliminary Magisterial Enquiry, which corresponds to police court proceedings in England, commenced in April 1929 and lasted eight months. The actual opening speech of the Crown, a large portion of which was devoted to a denunciation of the U.S.S.R., lasted from June 12th to June 26th. Practically the whole of this eight months was occupied with the evidence for the Prosecution, for most of the accused did not exercise their right to cross-examine the witnesses for the Prosecution or make statements or give evidence on their own behalf in that court.

In the meantime, the Government was making arrangements to provide a "trained judge" for the hearing of the charges. Procedure in India is in this respect similar to that of the English judicial system, that is to say, after a preliminary hearing before a Magistrate the accused are committed for trial before a judge. In

this case, however, the Government decided to appoint an individual from the Indian Civil Service, an Englishman, as an "additional sessions judge" to hear the case. This judge was Mr. Yorke. Under the provisions of the law prevailing in Meerut five nominated lay assessors sat with him throughout the case to "assist him". It is not easy to see what useful purpose these assessors served. They were not in any way comparable to a jury, because the sole responsibility for both the verdict and the sentence lies with the judge. Under the Indian Criminal Law, their function was to assist him to decide any questions of fact arising during a trial, but, whatever attention he may have paid to their advice during the trial, he largely disregarded it when it came to the question of the verdict, for in the case of five of the prisoners all the assessors found them "not guilty" but the judge decided that they were guilty, and in the case of another five the majority of assessors found the prisoners "not guilty" but the judge found that they were.

### **The Length of the Trial**

The hearing proper of the case lasted from January 1930 to September 1932, that is, two years and eight months. Its climax was an address by counsel for the Prosecution which lasted continuously for two months. From the time when they were arrested, March 1929 to April 1931, all the prisoners were kept in close confinement in prison and suffered the rigours of two Indian summers in the Indian plains. In spite of the effect of this confinement upon the health of men, who were still, at that time, entitled to be treated as innocent men, the Sessions Judge consistently refused to permit of their release on bail. Eventually ten were allowed bail by the High Court of India, who said, that in their opinion they should have been released long before.

*Four years is a long time between arrest and sentence. It is necessary therefore to consider whether the length of time was substantially caused by the Prosecution or the defence.*

As we have seen, it was necessary for the Prosecution to establish, in order to succeed in their charge, that the crime for which the men were accused was a political one. Pursuant to that

necessity, the Prosecution called no less than three hundred witnesses and introduced as evidence some three thousand books and documents. Leaving out printed books and pamphlets, the written documents alone make up seven volumes or a total of seven thousand pages of written evidence. Further the Prosecution made use of many files of newspapers, both Indian and foreign, as part of their evidence.

The trial, like most state trials is enormously expensive. Its cost to the Prosecution is in the neighbourhood of £ 200,000, an indication that the Government of India had little or no consideration for the cost, when faced with the necessity, in their own class interests, of attacking the more militant leaders of the trade union and working-class movement.

What was the necessity for the three hundred witnesses, for the seven thousand pages of written evidence, for the hundreds of books and pamphlets produced by the Prosecution, books which can be purchased in practically every country in the world? It was the political nature of the charge. Proof of the facts of the various prisoners would not have taken very long nor would the production of their intercepted correspondence have required any witnesses, but, since the prosecution had drawn up the charge in such a way as to raise the widest possible political issues, it deemed it advisable to support the charges with innumerable books and pamphlets and evidence for that end. The prosecution had to link up the actual thirty-one prisoners before them with the sixty-three "co-conspirators" mentioned in the complaint. It was compelled to attempt to link up the activities of the prisoners with the Third International, with the writing of Marx and Engels, and with the whole history, principles, and practice of Socialism and Communism and the growth of Nationalism. The Complaint, the Judge's Orders, the Speeches for the Prosecution and the Judgment itself dealt with these subjects in very great detail. In short the Prosecution had their own idea of what Socialism and Communism meant and then proceeded to fit the actual prisoners into what they deemed to be their proper place in the picture.

Naturally, since the political aspect of the conspiracy was emphasised by the Prosecution from the very start, those of the

prisoners who were Socialists and Communists were compelled to put forward their point of view to the court, and as the majority of the prisoners had definite political opinions they presented their opinions in a single joint statement so that it cannot be said that the action of the prisoners increased the length of the trial.

It cannot honestly be said that any action of the prisoners increased the length of the trial. Even making allowances for the fact that four of them (all convicted) were deprived of the right to address the court in their own defence (because they were not ready to do so on less than twenty-four hours' notice when one of the Counsel for the defence was suddenly taken ill) the time taken up by the evidence and statements of the prisoners was considerably less than that used by the Prosecution, and it must be remembered that while there was one Prosecution each of the thirty-one prisoners was entitled to make a separate defence. Some time was taken up during the four years by various applications made both by the prisoners and the Prosecution on such questions as admissibility of evidence, application for a jury or for bail or for transfer of the case to another court. The majority of the applications on the part of the prisoners was refused, but in no case did either the Sessions Judge or the other courts to which applications were made complain that the applications were unjustified or appeared to have been made for the purpose of causing delay. It would be grossly unfair to suggest that prisoners who are faced with life sentences should not be entitled to make applications of this nature.

No mention is ever made of the many adjournments during the course of the Trial for religious and other holidays and even if the Judiciary thought that the prisoners were unduly protracting the legal proceedings, Section 527 of the Indian Criminal Procedure Code gives the Governor-General power to transfer any case from one court to another "whenever it appears to him that the transfer will promote the ends of justice". The Viceroy with the Government of India had every reason to let the trial take its full course in the Sessions Court, and the prisoners' request to have their case transferred to a Higher Court was rejected.

In the face of great provocation the prisoners conducted themselves with calmness characteristic of working-class leaders. So much so that the Prosecuting Council even saw a conspiracy in their conduct, for he said:

"It has struck me very forcibly the astounding conspiracy of silence which has been carried on for two months. I have never addressed a Court for two months before this. To me it is astounding that not a single interruption has been made."

### **The "Co-Conspirators"**

The great advantage to the Prosecution of the introduction of the enormous volume of written evidence was the fact that by this means the prisoners' actions could be identified with the teachings of Socialist and Communist writers. In the ordinary charge it would be completely inadmissible to attempt to use as evidence against a prisoner the writings of somebody who had been dead for a considerable period of time. But when objections of this kind were made by the prisoner in these proceedings the judge was able legally to admit these writings as being relevant on the ground that they emanated from "fellow-conspirators" of the prisoners. The *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels, 1848, was extensively used in evidence against the prisoners.

To much of this kind of evidence serious objection can be taken. The Court invariably assumes without the slightest question that each and every Communist would carry out in all respects and in all circumstances the most violent programme ever advocated by any Communist writer, for example, that a member of the Communist Party in India would follow to the letter advice given by Lenin for use by his fellow workers in the midst of the revolutionary struggle in Russia in 1917; and this without the slightest evidence that any Communist, either charged or not charged, had ever advocated the employment of these methods in India in 1928.

Other objections of a more legal nature may be mentioned. For instance, documents connected by evidence only with a particular prisoner were used as evidence against them all. Communications by the prisoners to their legal advisers during the trial were

intercepted. And finally three important documents namely, a slip of paper, a draft article, and a letter which the police said they had found when they searched the various houses and apartments occupied by the prisoners, were used by the Prosecution and by the judge in spite of the failure of the Prosecution to produce them on the hearing.

### **The Prisoners' "Crime"**

The prisoners have been convicted by an Indian Court but that fact does not prevent intelligent people in England and the rest of the world asking the simple question: Did the prisoners do anything that was unlawful?

In the first place it is perfectly clear that none of the prisoners committed any act of illegality. Their writings and speeches warned the workers against the use of violence. The High Court themselves said: *"It is conceded that the accused persons have not been charged with having done any overt illegal act in pursuance of the alleged conspiracy . . . it is clear that if there was any offence committed in the nature of a conspiracy of a serious character, it was almost nipped in the bud. . . . All that they have done is to hold meetings, study the principles of Communism and probably also to make an attempt to disseminate the teachings which are said to be dangerous to society. . . ."*

Working-class activity in India subjected to narrow limits. The prisoners did not step outside of those limits.

Neither was there the slightest suggestion of any attempt at secrecy on the part of the prisoners. All the speeches of the prisoners used by the Prosecution, were speeches made at public meetings at which both police and reporters were usually present. It was not suggested that the prisoners made any attempt to conceal their movements; from their point of view there was no reason why they should.

As we have seen, the prisoners were nearly all actively engaged in trade union work; it follows therefore that their activities would naturally be expected to be propaganda, and the organization of demonstrations, agitation for the improvement of the wages and conditions of the workers, culminating, if necessary, in strikes,

and, to enlighten the youth of India, the formation of study circles and the like.

These in fact were the only activities of the prisoners of which evidence was given by the Prosecution.

It is true that the prisoners indulged in propaganda. They spoke, they wrote. In fact, they were active trade union leaders.

It is also true that the prisoners had organized many demonstrations, such as meetings of welcome to released political prisoners, the celebration of the Russian Revolution, and of May-day. The Prosecution viewed with great suspicion the help given by the trade unions in the demonstrations at Calcutta and Bombay in support of the boycott of the Simon Commission. The prisoners even organized meetings protesting against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti.

It was never suggested that any particular speech at any of these demonstrations was itself unlawful.

As for the formation of study circles and youth leagues one would have thought that, granted the right of the individual to think and teach himself, these could hardly have been anything but lawful. Almost the sole evidence against Hutchinson, one of the prisoners, was the formation of a study circle. The fact that he was convicted indicates the views held by the Government of India of those who attempt to encourage the youth to think.

### **The Real Crime**

The main feature of the work of the prisoners was to organize the workers into independent trade unions for the various industries and to use such organizations to resist by strike action any attempt of the employers to reduce the appalling standard of living of their members. These strikes all had an immediate industrial end in view; they were all in themselves lawful.

Accordingly, it was necessary for the Prosecution to find some underlying political and sinister motive. The speeches and writings of the prisoners were examined in the greatest detail; a selection of extracts was made and a dossier of phrases and sentences capable of a "subversive" meaning was prepared—and used. This, in fact was the principle evidence against the prisoners.

A strike for industrial ends is as lawful in India as it is in England. The trade unions with which the prisoners were connected were equally lawful. To find the prisoners guilty the Session Judge had of necessity to declare that the activities of the prisoners were unlawful, to say that strikes were not "genuine" ones, but part of a scheme to "deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty". One would imagine that in these circumstances the Court would make some show of examining the actual strikes and of at least declaring that they were not "genuine".

Precisely the reverse happened. The judge took up a completely illogical attitude. First, both he and the Prosecution declared that if the activities of the prisoners in their trade unions were "genuine" the Prosecution must fail. He then proceeded to declare that "the question of genuine grievances is not an issue in this case; it may be supposed that they were genuine grievances". It is difficult to find words adequate to describe such an example of judicial dishonesty.

It may reasonably be expected that the prisoners made every attempt to show the Court that their activities and the strikes they organized were justified by the appalling conditions and wages of the workers. Such applications were refused on the ground that the evidence would be irrelevant.

We may here interpose some evidence as to this of a kind that the Sessions Judge refused to hear. The Royal Commission on Labour in India says:—

"Prior to the winter of 1918-19 a strike was a rare occurrence in Indian industry. Strikes took place occasionally on the railways and in other branches of industry; but to the majority of industrial workers the use of the strike was probably unknown, lacking leadership and organization, and deeply imbued with a passive outlook on life, the vast majority of industrial workers regarded the return to the village as the only alternative to the endurance of hard conditions in industry. The end of the War saw an immediate change. There were some important strikes in the cold weather of 1918-19; they were more numerous in the following winter, and in the winter of 1920-21 industrial strife became almost general in organized industry. The main cause was the realisation of the



potentialities of the strike in the existing situation, and this was assisted by the emergence of the trade union organizers, by the education which the War had given to the masses, and by a scarcity of labour arising from the expansion of industry and aggravated by the great epidemics of influenza."

In a search for a logical basis for the convictions, one asks if the prisoners were prosecuted because of their opinions? The Court was especially anxious to make it clear that they were not. The Magistrate who committed the prisoners for trial stated: "It is no crime to hold Communist views." The Session Judge adopted this expression of opinion and even added of his own accord: "This is not a Prosecution for holding opinions."

In the end the Government of India presents one with a pretty little puzzle. "Genuine strikes and trade union activity", it says in effect, "are perfectly lawful, nor do we prosecute people for the opinions they hold. Yet we will spend £ 200,000 and use any means in our power to harry and convict any one who looks like making trade union's work in this country."

The truth is that the whole structure of this colossal trial was a sham, an attempt to dress the counter-revolution in wig and gown. Strikes are legal in theory so long as they are ineffectual in practice; a man's opinions are no crime so long as they conform with those of his rulers. Let a band of devoted men set out to organise the toiling masses of India against the oppression of their foreign rulers and their blood-sucking masters—what is worse, let them succeed—then they have committed a real crime against the capitalist state. They have "conspired" with their fellow workers all over the world to wring some measure of justice out of a system that exists only to exploit them.

## **The Speech of the Prosecutor in the Meerut Case**

### **PART II**

Now I have said that this International existed at the beginning of the war. It was also in existence at the end of the war. But by that time the Bolsheviks had captured the power in Russia and their views, as I have attempted to point out, did not coincide at all with the views of Amsterdam with whom at that time and later the name of our present Prime Minister was constantly coupled in Bolshevik literature. Therefore, an attempt was made to found another International in Russia and naturally, and as a matter of course, the persons who attempted to found it and did in fact found it were this Communist Party in Russia, which had by that time increased to a larger figure than it had been before, but was still a very tiny minority. I think it is important to bear in mind the fact that this Communist International was founded by the Russian Bolshevik or Communist Party which ruled Russia at that time and that this Communist International embraced all the tenets of Bolshevism, and the views expressed by this Communist International are identically the same as the views expressed by this Communist Party of Russia.

When I come to deal with the organisation of the International, you will see, Sir, that in fact the Communist Party of Russia is a section of the International and the Communist Parties of all other countries are also sections of the International. In theory, the International can meet anywhere in Europe. In practice, it always meets in Russia; and it must follow as a matter of common sense that Russian influence is therefore the predominant factor in this International, and when we come to deal with this organisation

you will find that not only is it the predominant influence but it is practically the regulating and controlling influence

Now, so much for, very briefly, the story as to the origin of this body, I will now deal as shortly with the creed and objective Now, it may be said, I think with some truth, that the creed of Bolshevism has an old testament and a new testament The old testament is the gospel according to Karl Marx and is exemplified, I suppose, best in the well-known Communist Manifesto issued by Karl Marx and Engels The new testament may be said to be the gospel according to Ulianov or Lenin which I suppose, is typified, if you can find any one book better than another—I notice Mr Spratt selected it for the education of the youth—in *State and Revolution*

Now, I do not propose to discuss at all the materialistic philosophy of Marx and his theory of accumulation of surplus values I do not know whether anybody entertains any feelings of love for this somewhat antiquated philosophy, but it is unnecessary to go into it because Marx exists for the Bolshevik not on account of his philosophy of accumulation of surplus values but because of his theory or rather his theories as to (1) the class war, (2) the state, and (3) the dictatorship of the proletariat Now, first of all, as to his theory of the class war Marx divided the world into two classes which he named the proletariat class and the capitalist or bourgeois class

Now, it would seem that you ought to be able to get from this Communist Manifesto a fairly clear definition of those two terms, seeing how important they are, but I regret to say that it is not so possible as one would have expected The capitalists are described as the class of modern capitalist owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour That is fairly satisfactory. The proletariat is referred to in three places First of all, may I say that the word comes from the Latin word "proletari" as far as I know, which may be loosely translated as wasters, and referred to the people who came in from the country districts, flocked into Rome and had practically no occupation and no property. I am not throwing any stones at the proletariat at all as defined by Marx, but that is the origin of the word

Now, to come back to Marx. He first of all says that the proletariat are the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live. Well, of course, incidentally that covers me and anybody else who merely makes a living, shall we say, by his wits. But a little later we get this further definition. "Without property, his relations to his wife and his family have no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations; low morality and religion are to him so many bourgeois prejudices." And later again, the proletariat is described as "the lowest stratum of society".

Now, it probably would be a rough and ready description to say that the proletariat are the have-nots of this world and the other party are those who have got something. I do not pretend that this is at all a scientific description, but that is what in fact it practically comes to. The theory of Marx was that there was a bitter struggle between the proletariat and the capitalist or the bourgeoisie and certainly the Bolsheviki claims that Marx said that it could not be ended except by bloody revolution.

Well, now, to come to his theory of the state. I suppose any ordinary person who thinks about the state regards it as an institution which for better or for worse, well or less well, is there to guard the liberties and rights of all the citizens in the state and see to the best of its ability that they all get fair play and equal treatment. I say that this is the sort of idea that the ordinary man would entertain with regard to the state. Now, that was not at all the theory of Marx. Marx said that the state was the organ of the ruling class and inasmuch as the bourgeoisie or capitalists or haves, or whatever you like to call them, were the ruling class, and the proletariat or have-nots never had been in power, it followed that the state was the organ of the bourgeoisie or the capitalists.

Now, the duty according to him of the proletariat in this class-struggle which was going on perpetually and which would ultimately come to a head, the duty of the proletariat was to smash in pieces this state, this organ of the capitalist class. It had to be smashed in pieces. And the persons who were to take power were the proletariat. And their assumption of power was called by him

the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is clear, it must be clear, to anybody that you cannot have a dictatorship of a mass in practice, however much you may have it in theory, and it is equally clear, I think, that a dictatorship primarily means Government by one man and in any sense must mean Government by a small compact little body of men, a bureau if you like. And, therefore, the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat meant that some one person or some small body of people on behalf of the proletariat should seize the Government. Much stress is laid by Lenin later on the point that the proletariat had not got to capture the existing state and use it, but had got to smash the existing organ into pieces and erect or set up an entirely new state of their own.

Well, now, the theory goes on—and it may sound a little fantastic, at least it did to me the first time I read it, and in fact it has proved to be quite impossible in practice—but the theory goes on in this way. Having smashed the capitalist state into pieces, having set up the new rule of the dictatorship of the proletariat, you have then got to a transitional stage. This dictatorship of the proletariat is merely transitional. It is in fact, of course, the substitution of the autocratic rule of one lot of people, or what the Bolshevik considers the autocratic rule of one lot of people, by the autocratic rule of another lot of people. It is only transitional and the millennium is to be reached when there is no longer any class in the state at all. We are all exactly the same. We are all to become workers on the bench.

I am afraid that would not include your Honour, at least not in their sense. I mean we are all to become actual workers in a factory or actual workers in the field. Then we have got to the millennium of the classless community. And then what happens is this, that the state "withers away". It withers away. And I suppose you have no state in the millennium and everybody owns everything or nobody owns anything, I am not quite sure which.

Now, that is the gospel according to Marx, put as fairly as I can put it, and the important point of it, I think, is this class-struggle and the fact that this dictatorship of the proletariat is only transitional. The gospel according to Lenin was concerned principally with the capturing of power by the Communist Party.

that is to say the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and with this question as to the transitional stage. Lenin was a considerable authority upon both these points naturally. It was he who led this Red Revolution in Russia and it was he who directed the course of the Government after the revolution was effected.

To Lenin, the substitution of the proletarian state for the existing state is absolutely impossible without a violent bloody revolution. He emphasised that point in that admirable book that I told you was prescribed by Mr. Spratt for the very young, *The State and Revolution*. He emphasised that point that you cannot capture power and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat without a bloody revolution. He says that it is the duty of Communists in all countries to work steadily to bring about an armed uprising of the proletariat to overthrow the existing system of Government and seize the state. Lenin preached this gospel both before and after the armed revolution in Russia and this is the doctrine which is commemorated and glorified on Lenin Day, which is January 21 in each year, and on the anniversary of the October Revolution in each year.

I say that is the doctrine which is commemorated and glorified on those occasions and those are some of the demonstrations which the accused boast they have introduced into India. Now, I suppose that most people are acquainted to some extent with what in fact happened in Russia. These, to me, fantastic theories of Marx were pushed to their logical conclusions with a ruthless brutality which must make everybody in the world shudder. I have found in fact with the accused a book which in its proper place I will deal with, called *Bolshevism, the Dream and the Fact*. And it is interesting to note that they must have known what effect it had upon Russia, and there is no reason to suppose that they did not. But this book gives a very lurid account of the Red Terror. I will read you only two or three passages from it. (Reads.)

Mr. D. P. SINHA : What is the date and author of the book?

Mr. LANGFORD JAMES : The author of the book is Edmund Candler, and the date of publication is 1920. The passage occurs on page 37.

Mr. D. P. SINHA : Is that going as an exhibit in the case?

Mr. LANGFORD JAMES : That is entirely for me to decide.

Mr. D. P. SINHA : With great respect I would submit to your Honour that

my learned friend in his opening address can only refer to a book of law or to a book which he proposes to file as an exhibit in the case And if he refers to any book which does not fit into either of these two categories than I submit we have every right to draw your Honour's attention to this

The JUDGE You can draw my attention to it But I must ask you not to interrupt more than necessary because we can never get on at this rate

*Mr. Langford James—*

We are all sensitive this morning

What one cannot imagine, the physical and mental torture that followed, the cold-blooded murder not only of the aristocrats and the class that used to be called the respectable bourgeois, but peasants, working men, priests and old men

This book gives a gruelling account of the horrible terror which followed and which is defended by Trotsky in his *Defence of Terrorism* as being a necessity and at times a necessary part of the programme of this International For us in this court, however, I think the more important point is that this Russian revolution was a revolution which had as its object the smashing to pieces of the existing state of Government, and indeed did in fact smash it to pieces.

If the example of Russia is to be followed in India it is essential that, as an integral part of the process, the Government of His Majesty as by law established should be smashed in pieces Bolshevism may be, as I believe it to be, a festering sore on the face of Europe, a cruel and tyrannous autocracy masquerading under the mask of popular Government, or it may be a paradise on earth The hard fact still remains that if Bolshevism and that system is to be introduced into India the Government of His Majesty must as a preliminary be smashed in pieces There is no room for both of them

Now, this Russian revolution, as I have already indicated, was carried through by a small and resolute body of men It is not so generally understood that the present Government of Russia is carried on by a small and resolute body of men who, on their own figures, claim to be only about one and a-quarter million out of a total population of something like 180 millions. In the rural Soviets, both village Soviets and district Soviets, the peasants

have a very large footing; in fact they have a majority. But gradually the proportion of Communists increases in the higher Soviet organs, in action and they are in absolute control of all positions of power. The All-Russian Soviet is entirely dominated by the Russian Communist Party.

It is not a fact that Russia is a happy land peopled by Communists. It is a fact that it is ruled by Communists with the help of the O.G.P.U. and the Red Army. The O.G.P.U., which used to be called the Cheka, is the police force of Russia and it is entirely of course under the control of this Communist Party, and by means of it and the Red Army the people of the country are terrorised into submission to the rule which is imposed upon them. This purposeful minority, which I have indicated governs Russia, has its counterparts in other countries, and they, as I think I have already pointed out, together make up the Comintern.

Now I have digressed somewhat, perhaps, because I remember I said that the gospel according to Lenin was concerned with two things, the capturing of the power and the transitional stage. I had dealt with the capturing of power, but I left the question of the transitional stage in abeyance. Before I deal with this question of the transitional stage according to Lenin's ideas, I want to say a word about another matter which is of extreme importance in any consideration of Bolshevism, and that is the peasant question. Now this doctrine of Karl Marx and Engels was essentially applicable and intended to be applied to industrial countries, such as England and Germany.

I think you can search the writings of Marx through and find practically no—if any very little—reference to the peasants. The theory does not lend itself to dealing with peasants. The irony of the thing is that this experiment should have been tried in a country like Russia which is essentially a peasant country. I suppose that if you searched the world over for countries which were essentially agricultural or peasant countries, the two that would head the list would be Russia and India. Lenin was consequently at an early stage confronted with the difficulty of this peasant question.



Now the peasant is usually a man who is of a very conservative frame of mind. He loves his home, he loves his country and he loves his God. In fact, he is prone to possess all those fallacious ideas which the Bolshevik desires to root out. But not only that, the peasant usually has or attempts to have a little bit of land of his own. And as a matter of fact in 1905 in Russia the reforms of Stolypin had largely increased the possibility for the peasant to have this little plot of land of his own.

Now Lenin divides the peasants into five classes. The first is the agricultural proletariat. This group must be organised in independent organisations separated from the other groups of the rural population. Then he gets to the semi-proletariat or poor peasants. This group may be converted to the law of the proletariat if the work is properly conducted by the Communist Party. You have got the very lowest stratum, which you ought to be able to get hold of, and then you get the stratum which you might with proper attention get hold of. Then comes the small peasantry, these are small land-owners, owing or renting small plots of land which satisfy the requirements of their families, and they do not therefore employ wage labour. In the transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat this group may waver in its policy. However, if the proletarian policy is firmly conducted, if the victorious proletariat deals sufficiently thoroughly with the large land owners and wealthy peasants, this group, in spite of its wavering, will, on the whole, be on the side of the proletarian revolution.

Then you get to the middle peasantry. In the economic sense these are small peasants owning or renting small plots of land which under Capitalism as a general rule provide them not only with a modest income but even with the possibility of obtaining a certain superfluity, at least in good years, which they can convert into capital and large farms, frequently rising to the employment of wage labour. The wavering of this group during the period of revolution will be greater than that of the previously mentioned group. Therefore, at least in the immediate future and in the beginning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the aim must be not so much to win this group over as to neutralise it. Then you

come to the rich peasantry who are quite outside the pale. Those are the capitalist farmers operating as a general rule with a number of wage workers and bound to the peasantry only by their low cultural level and habits of life and the fact that they personally work on their farms. This group is a direct and determined enemy of the proletariat. And finally, you have the large land-owner. In the *ABC of Communism*, which is a book I shall quote often, I find that there are only three classes of these peasants alluded to.

So that, generally speaking, the Communist has to deal with the question of the peasants by dividing them into three classes: firstly, the man who is frankly a capitalist, the man who has his own land; secondly, the middle-class man who may go this way or that; thirdly, that class of hopeless people who in Russia are known as "horseless" peasants because they have no horses. I notice that Mr. Spratt, as we shall see when I come to deal with that, calls that last class the landless peasant. Now, the question was, what on earth to do with these people. I may tell you that the rich land-owning peasant, the rich peasant, is in Russian called a Kulak. It really means a vulture, and the question arose in Russia at a very early stage as to what was to be done with those Kulaks. As I have said, the matter solved itself in a practical manner at a very early stage. The Marxian theory apparently is, as I have tried to point out, that once everybody in the land is on an equal basis, classes disappear and the State withers away. Now I take it for granted that unless and until the State withers away, the Moscow clique, or this little body of men which carries on the dictatorship of the proletariat, remains in power. The transitional stage continues. Now obviously the withering away cannot begin until everybody is equal, and until you have reached the classless stage. Any form of Capitalism must make this millennium an impossibility, because as long as any form of Capitalism exists, the transitional stage continues and the classless stage cannot possibly be reached.

Now the ordinary Bolshevik method with the capitalist, whether his capital be in land or in money, is to kill him. In the case of the big land-owners that was a simple and comparatively popular panacea. But, after extensive trial, its extension to the peasant proprietor or Kulak was found not to be feasible. Yet, as I

have tried to point out, to the disciples of Marx the Kulak can find no place in the ideal State. Now in the end the Kulak had to be left. The State or the party had to content themselves with taxing the Kulak very heavily. But they had to leave him there. It was also discovered to be quite impossible to run the ordinary business side of life without the small capitalist.

### PART III

According\* to the theory, the state was supposed to take over all the manufactures and factories soon. But it was discovered that, that was quite impossible. Something had to be done, and in the result, Capitalism in that department also was sanctioned. Now it was quite impossible to call it capitalism because it would be obvious to everybody and to the Communists themselves that they had admitted that they were departing from true Communist doctrine. So this capitalist system of leaving the Kulak in the country and the small capitalist in the town was sanctioned in the name of the new economic policy. And as apparently the Bolshevik always gives everything a nick-name or calls it by initials, this policy was solemnly called NEP. The best brains of the Moscow clique were commandeered to justify Nep. In the very nature of things, of course, it was impossible to tell the truth about it, but torrents of verbiage were poured out in explanation of this new creation.

For real successful obscurantism on this subject I think the palm ought to be awarded to Comrade Bukharin. His report to the International on Nep in 1924 is a masterpiece of pseudo-logical balderdash. But I am not so much concerned with the nonsense which has been written about Nep as with the inner and true meaning of this thing. The introduction of Nep and the protection of the Kulak made it absolutely certain that *this transitional stage was to continue for ever. They are never going to reach the millennium, at least not in our lifetime. Comrade Zinoviev, in*

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\*The prosecutor is giving in detail his conception of the theory and practice underlying the Soviet State.

*Russia's Path to Communism*, finds some solace in the fact that side by side with the Kulak the Government is organising the horseless peasant and the batrak, as I understand him; at any time the Moscow clique can stage a perfectly satisfactory massacre of Kulaks by the horseless peasants. But that is small satisfaction to the true Marxian.

I fancy everybody in the inner ring now realises that this transitional Government is a permanency for the simple reason that the Communist State has proved to be a practical impossibility. It cannot ever wither away because it is not feasible that it should ever exist. Now, of course, one cannot come to that conclusion without thinking that this is the chimæra for which some two and a-half millions of men, women and children have been butchered by the OGPU at this dictation of these doctrinaire desperadoes. But it seems to me that the matter is of even more importance from another point of view.

In spite of the fact that everybody now knows that the millennium can never be reached in practice and in fact, we have this monotonous bleating going on from Moscow in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the betterment of the peasant, the betterment of the worker and so on. And you will find that you get it re-echoed from these accused who must have known just as well as everybody else, or better because they had the whole literature, that the whole thing is a practical impossibility, and when we deal with the case I shall ask you to hold that all these slogans which they have sprinkled about so freely are not used to benefit the worker or the peasant but are used to push forward and foster this revolution upon which they have made up their minds.

It is not perhaps very material to his case but, as far as I can see, this question of Nep has been the point upon which there has been a good deal of quarrelling in the Bolsheviki camp. I suppose it is a matter of common knowledge that Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Bukharin and Tomsky have all been banished from Russia by Mr. Stalin, and it seems to me to be likely at any rate that it is upon this question of Nep that the real trouble has taken place.

I have now finished with the question of Lenin's views as to this transitional period. Interesting as they are, I would ask you not to let them remove from your mind the other point in which Lenin so strongly follows Karl Marx, namely, that the capitalist state must be smashed, not only in Russia but all over the world. I will also ask you to remember the point that I made that whether it be a fact, for I believe it is, that the people who dominate the Government of Russia dominate also the Comintern, I say whether that be a fact or not, it is a fact that the views and objects of the Government of Russia are identically the same as the views and objects of the Communist International. By their creed, by their convictions, by their constitution itself, they are inexorably bound to work intensively and unceasingly for the overthrow of the British Monarchy in England, in India and in the Dominions. Every Member of the Communist Party is definitely pledged to the task. Their outpost in the enemies' country is the Communist Party in Great Britain, and they have worked to plant another outpost here in India. These people are the implacable enemies of the sovereignty of His Majesty the King Emperor. With them there is no question of live and let live. They are quite prepared to live, but the decree of the Comintern, which binds the Communist Party of Russia as a section of the Comintern, forbids them to let live.

Every member of the Government of Russia is a member of the Communist Party of Russia, and is therefore a member of the Comintern and bound by its decrees. It is pledged to work for the overthrow of His Majesty's Government by any means in its power, and let nobody have any illusions on this point. Not only is it pledged to work for the overthrow of His Majesty's Government, that is quite a necessary preliminary, but it is also pledged to work for the overthrow of what it is pleased to call the bourgeois in every country including India, and though they may for the moment use the national bourgeoisie for their own purposes, when they have done with it, it is ruthlessly shown up, and it will, of course, go into the limbo with all of us, anybody who is not of the party. I don't want your Honour to take my word only, my *ipse dixit*, that this Government of Russia is pledged to overthrow the

Government of His Majesty and regards that Government as its natural enemy. I propose to read to you a few passages from a paper which is one of the publications of this body and which with its flair for nick-names and short names it calls the "Inprecorr". That means the International Press Correspondence. I propose to read to you a few passages taken at random from that paper. Anybody who reads it will realise that it literally reeks with anit-British propaganda, but I will only pick a few of them.

I should like to explain before I read them a point which I did make earlier in my address, and it is this. The Government of Great Britain, if it is in the hands of the Conservatives, for instance, is regarded—Mr. Baldwin or Mr. Churchill are regarded—as being hopeless reactionaries. It is no good wasting breath over them. Naturally you would overthrow them. But with the Government of the Labour Party and the Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, and his associates, Thomas, Clynes, Henderson, &c., the matter stands upon a different footing. These gentlemen are regarded as traitors to the cause. The Bolsheviks believe quite rightly, as I suppose and hope, that none of these gentlemen, whether in Opposition or as the accredited Ministry, would plot and plan to overthrow His Majesty's rule. Yet that is what, according to the Moscow people, they ought to be doing. They are called traitors for not so doing, and they are daubed with the yellow brush of Amsterdam. If you will bear that in mind I will just give you a few extracts over a series of years. It cannot be said that this is only a temporary or local madness.

*Extract from Inprecorr, Vol. 4, No. 41, dated July 16, 1924, Page 409.*

The situation, therefore, is not so simple. The MacDonald Government is still on a rising wave of popularity. But if we wait passively until the tide turns, then we shall have no need of a Communist Party. The Social Democracy will go bankrupt anyhow. We are there to hasten the process. That is the reason why our Party in England must already resolutely fight MacDonald now in order that the masses, when they at length realise MacDonald's true character, will know that we, the Communists, told them the truth long ago.

In the year 1921 Lenin fought against Wynkoop, and other "Lefts" of that time, over the question of Communists joining the Labour Party. But

in the year 1924 we are face to face with a new situation. A "Labour" Government exists, and MacDonald is in power. Therefore, our little group of Communists must follow its historic path. They must first become a mass party, and, secondly, begin to recruit workers into the party and found a daily paper. When one talks to the English comrades about this they say that is asking them to wear a hat that is far too big for their heads, and they worry about how this hat will fit them. Thirdly, we must more thoroughly permeate the rank and file of the trade unions in order to form a Left-Wing movement there. Fourthly, more attention must be paid to the youth. Until quite recently there was no Young Communist Movement at all in England, and it is even now only at its very beginning. Fifth, the colonial question must be attacked with audacity, such as befits Bolsheviks. Sixth, digressions to the right must be combatted wherever they are met with, election campaigns must be conducted differently, the lines proposed by Rosmer must not be followed, in their propaganda they must be prepared even for a break. That is the most important problem for the English Party.

These are the theories and resolutions adopted by the Fifth Congress, and I am reading from a copy of August 29, 1924, page 653.

*Extract from Inprecorr vol 9 No 17 April 5, 1929*

The soil of India is rising in flames under the feet of British imperialism. The flow of the strike wave surpasses the highest tide of the labour movement in the earliest phase of the revolution, 1921. The rapidly-growing Left-Wing unions enjoy the fighting support of broad masses. Thousands of workers in Bombay and Calcutta are marching and demonstrating under the banner of struggle for the Soviets.

Down with British imperialism, the plunderer and hangmen of India.  
Down with the Swrajists and other bourgeois parties traitors to the Indian national revolution.

Down with the British and Indian reformist flunkeys, the agents of imperialism.

Long live the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants of India.

Long live independent and liberated India.

Long live the Indian Soviet Republic.

The point that I make is this. Nobody can have the slightest doubt as far as I can see that these people in Moscow, whether the Government of Russia or the Comintern, have deliberately plotted and planned to overthrow British Imperialism, that is to say, to overthrow the sovereignty of His Majesty. They may be right or

they may be wrong, but that is the fact and if you find a body of people in India who say that they want to follow the Moscow road, that they wish to bring into India the same rule as exists in Russia, that they want to introduce the Soviet system into India, I say if you find those people saying that and if you find them working to do that, indeed then it is not possible in the nature of things that they should be doing anything else than plotting and planning and conspiring to smash His Majesty's Government to pieces. That is the whole object of the Bolshevik and so intense are his feelings that he regards it in the nature of a religious obligation that this should be done.

(The prosecutor read further extracts from theses published by the Communist International to make clear its objective, and then continued as follows).

Now I come to the question of the organisation of this body. I have here prepared a graph and I will explain to the gentlemen representing the accused what it is. I have put on one side a circle which is intended to represent the Communist International or Comintern, and I have divided it roughly into sections like the slices of an orange. In those sections are the C.P.S.U., the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the C.P.G.B., which is the English Communist Party, the W.C.P., the American Communist Party, the C.P.F., the French Communist Party. Of course it is not to be supposed that these are at all exhaustive. There are a large number of other Communist Parties, all forming this body, which therefore is an amalgam of the Communist Parties of the World, all of which hold the views which I have just been reading out. Now underneath this body I have put in a small lozenge-shaped thing, the E.C.C.I., which is the Executive Committee of the Communist International. It on occasions expands itself into the Plenum, which is the enlarged committee. On occasions it contracts into the Præsidium, which is the smaller body. I believe and I shall ask you to hold, sir, that we have the honour of having in our midst a member of this Præsidium.

Let me give you a hint of what I believe to be the real truth about the whole of this matter. I am sure that everybody has been accustomed, certainly in this country, to large Committees which



are generally called "Shop Window Committees", on which you get all the big names. then you have a sub-Committee which is assumed to be doing the work. But then you have either one or two permanent secretaries, who really do the work. Now, I think, you will find that that is the key to this Communist International. Underneath the ECCI I have put down the Secretariat. This is a permanent Secretariat and the head of it is Mr. Stalin. And that is why Mr. Stalin is virtually the Dictator of the whole concern. He remains as the head of the Secretariat and from that excellent position he has been able to banish from Russia anybody who disagrees with him. I gave the names I think yesterday—Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Kamenev, Tomsky and Bukharin. They have all gone because they disagreed with Mr. Stalin.

However that may be, here is this Secretariat and branching out from this Secretariat I have put down one or two other sub-Committees. They are really supposed to be sub-Committees of the E.C.C.I. For instance, there is the Org. Bureau, which means Organisation Bureau. We shall find it re-echoed by some of the accused in this case. "We have no Org. here." Or, "The Org. is extraordinarily bad." Well, this is the Org. Bureau. Then you find the Ogpu, \*the Police, which is very important. Then the Agit. Prop., that means the Committee which exists for the purpose of fostering and stirring up "agitation" and "propaganda" in favour of the revolution. Then there is the Editorial Staff. That is an important little body because it sees to it that nothing except Bolshevik propaganda is published in Russia; only their side of the case is to be stated. An excellent rule of life if you want to rule! Then the next one we have is the Oriental Committee, and as a special section of that there is a colonial Commission which looks after our interests over here. There are several other Sub-Committees, but I will not trouble Your Honour with them as they do not really arise much in connection with this case.

Then you will notice that I have taken in a line away from the Secretariat, because they are all under it, and put down on the right

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\*To suit Mr. Langford James' purpose, the G.P.U. is made a department of the Communist International!—Ed.

hand side of the paper a large number, though not anything like all of them, of Internationals. I have called them Affiliated Internationals but I should like to explain what they are. Now, the first one is the International for the Revolutionary Youth of the World. It is called the Young Communist International, the Y.C.I. It has another interest for us because the man who was first in charge of it was Comrade Willi Munzenberg. Then there is the Women's International. Then there is the Trades Unions' International—a very important one originally called the Profintern, but now called the RILU. Then there is the Peasants' International, which was called the Krestintern so long as it existed. I believe it has since practically ceased to exist.

Then there are other Internationals, such as the International of the Intellectuals, the Teachers' International, the Sports International, known as the Sportintern; so that when you play football, for instance, you may be able to go on working out the revolution to come. Then there is another one called the War Resisters' International, \* because, although you may not know it, we are the White Terror. That is not used in any Nordic sense. Everybody who opposes these people are the White Terror. My learned friends there, and all of us, are making war upon this peaceful body in Moscow, and so it is necessary to have a War Resisters' International.

Now these Internationals play quite a part in the propaganda which comes from Moscow. Let us take a case. Suppose you have a strike of Textile workers in Bombay. Instantly from Moscow the International of Textile Workers of the World sends greetings and money. And I am certain that if you had a strike of the Hereditary Painters of Spots on White Horses, then the International of Hereditary Painters of Spots on White Horses would send greetings from Moscow and money in support of the Strike. These Internationals I think exist largely on paper, and they exist largely for this propaganda purpose. They are under the Secretariat, and I imagine they wander, from one room to another or possibly stay in

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\*This pacifist body will be surprised to learn that is, too, is a section of the Comintern.—Ed.

one room; they have a Board Meeting of the Peasants and then a Board Meeting of the Sportingtern (*sic*) and then another one of the War Resisters, and so on.

Now part of the difficulties in the way of anybody who tries to track the Bolshevik to his ultimate lair lies in the fact that they are constantly multiplying these bodies. You will find upon my graph there, for instance, that against the RILU I have put two bodies, which means that those two bodies have been brought into existence and are fathered, so to speak, by this RILU. The two bodies are the National Minority Movement in England and a thing called the P.P.T.U.S., which is the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. Now the National Minority Movement in England is in fact that part of the English Trades Unions which are an integral part of the RILU. You can compare the RILU to the Comintern in this way. Whereas the Comintern is an amalgam of the Communist Parties of the world, the RILU is an amalgam of the Red or Communist Trades Unions of the world. It is difficult to put this National Minority Movement into a graph, especially for an amateur like me. But this National Minority Movement is not so much a child of the RILU as an integral part of the RILU.

Now, the P.P.T.U.S. is not an integral part of the RILU but it is affiliated to the RILU, and I will show you very shortly that it is a definite Communistic body acting under this RILU.

(The prosecutor quotes from the Report of the Fourth congress of the RILU on the need of support for the Pan-Pacific Secretariat on the part of militant workers.)

There is more in regard to this P.P.T.U.S.; for instance, the newspaper which it publishes starts with the well-known slogan "Workers of the World Unite" on the top of it. I thought it had that badge. I noticed that some of the accused here have on that badge, the badge of the Russian Revolution, the Hammer and Sickle

With regard to the National Minority Movement, although I have to prove these statements, I do not think they would be seriously contested, the National Minority Movement is a portion of the RILU.

If anybody after this says that the RILU is not the same as the Comintern he will be speaking accurate verbal truth, because the Comintern is one body and the RILU is another, but in mind and in objective they are identically the same, and they are really run by the same people.

There are other references to the Third Congress. But I will not trouble you more. There is an excellent work by the late lamented Tomsky. He has written a little brochure on the subject which makes it perfectly clear that the RILU was one in soul and spirit with the Comintern.

You will find upon that graph some other names. these bodies are analogous to the International Communist Parties. There are also bodies like the P.P.T.U.S. which branch off from one or other of these Internationals. Then there are other bodies which it is slightly difficult to place. I mention three of those down below in the graph. Two of them are the Workers' Welfare League and the Labour Research Department. The third is the League against Imperialism. The League against Imperialism from its name flies its flag in the open, but the Workers' League is a delightful body. It had to explain at one time that it was in no way connected with a religious body, but existed for the welfare of the workers.

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